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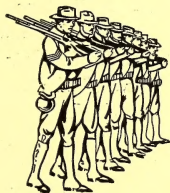




"AS YOU WERE"



Leaves from the Diary  
OF A  
Catholic Chaplain  
IN THE  
Great World War



BY  
FATHER BERNARD CAREY, C. S. Sp.  
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*To the intrepid Officers and dashing "Boys"  
Living and Dead, of the B. W. I. Regt.  
and especially to the 1st, 2nd and  
3rd (Sev.) Battalions, these  
few pages are affectionately  
dedicated by their  
old Padre  
B. C.*

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# Leaves from a Chaplain's Diary

## CHAPTER I

### "THE CLOUDBURST"



ONCE again the world, worn and weary after a war of human slaughter such as humanity in all its long and varied history has never known, breathes an atmosphere of peace. Alas! for the broken hearts and the eyes dimmed with ceaseless weeping, and the countless vacant chairs in the million homes of the world that can never be filled again! Alas! for all the human blood that has purpled the fields of slaughter in the vast theaters of the Great World War, and the bones of the millions of loved ones, of the good and true and brave, now mouldering in honored though unhallowed graves, far away from the land where they were born and bred and waxed strong into that stately, straight and strenuous manhood which they gave so generously for Freedom's cause.

In the quiet of the present it is not pleasant to look back into the seething sorrows of the past five years. Memories of many a noble deed, pictures of generous sacrifices rise up, no doubt, out of the sacred past; but the bitter memory of blood and slaughter, the reckless reckoning of human life, the loved and lost, aye, lost till the angel's trump of doom shall awaken the sleeping dead, brings many a heartache that makes memory cruel and makes the world seem as if it could never be bright for many of us again!

Many a thrilling tale will be told and many a pen-picture will be drawn to feed the hunger of the novel reader and bookworm, but for us who have been through it, who have dared and done and well nigh died, such tales and pictures will be but empty succors to the pain of heart that nothing can ever soothe or heal again. No roll of honor can dry the widow's tears nor bring color back into the thin, pale cheek of the orphan child. Away your gold! Lucre is no balm to the gaping wound in a mother's broken heart.

The war is over, the world opens a new page in her story, and as she goes on through the years to come, just as she went through the years that are gone, the rust of the passing ages will eat away from the tablet and pillar full many a name that was never to be forgotten—Alas! for human gratitude!

How strange it all looks now, as one's thoughts travel back through the strange events of the past five years to that momentous day, the fourth of August, 1914, when England cried out "*Noblesse oblige*," the freedom of Belgium is attacked, her stipulated neutrality has been broken by Germany. France, our ally by the well-known "*Entente Cordiale*," has already declared war on the invading nation; we, too, must fight—England, the lover of freedom, the defender of the liberty of small nations, the generous giver of all good gifts—even to Ireland, at length, a Home Rule Bill had passed the Commons and bore the King's signature—she could not but enter the fight. Of course, it was for Belgium's sake. She had no fear for herself. "*Britannia Rules the Seas*."



The whole British Empire was in twenty-four hours a boiling cauldron. Confusion reigned everywhere. Men scarce knew what they thought or said. Innocent words became treason, buying from or selling to the enemy was at once criminal. The name of Germany was spoken only through set teeth and clenched hand, and in a voice of deadly hate. There was a confused rushing to and fro; prices of everything soared beyond the possibility of the ordinary man. Rumor followed rumor of one horror after another. Honest men were suspected, innocent men were not trusted, and all over the British Empire men rushed madly to arms. A fearful outrage had been committed, the sacred rights of Belgium had been desecrated, unspeakable atrocities on innocent people were alleged to have been perpetrated by Germany, and finally one saw tens of thousands in khaki rushing hither and thither, in every street of every city and town and village of Europe and European colonies. Even Ireland, downtrodden by England and persecuted for centuries, flung her claims for justice to the winds, forgot her long suffering when she heard the cry of Belgium, and her brave sons rushed to the colors to stay the massacre of the innocent and do their share to break down the power of might over right. Every insult, yea, every villainy on the part of England was forgotten by Ireland as her sons enlisted in their thousands, a spectacle so wonderful, so unexpected, so magnanimous, that it drew from the lips of a leading English statesman these well-known words: "*Ireland is the one bright spot in the British Empire.*" Thus France and

England stood together before the great common enemy. Italy, the ally of Austria, having secured the infamous pact of London, abandoned Austria and threw in her forces with France and England, and the whole of Europe was in a conflagration. When we say Italy, we mean Italy's government, ruled by Freemasons and anti-clerics, were guilty of this act, which many have not hesitated to qualify as treacherous. Italy's people are and have been always the faithful children of Holy Church, unwavering in their filial piety to the Madonna, God's most Holy Mother. The sons of Italy may have their faults (as what nation is perfect?), but their fair land of sunshine and shower has never been sullied by the darkness of heresy nor their Catholic faith poisoned by the misery of unbelief. Loyal sons of the Vicar of Christ, the **Prince of Peace**, they would never have been a party to a pact that would hush the voice of the Holy Father, who alone could say with truth, "My peace I give unto you, my peace I leave to you, not as the world giveth do I give unto you."

## CHAPTER II

### HOMELAND, GOODBYE



DOWN in a Southern Island of the Atlantic, nursed in the cradle of the Carribean Sea, fanned by the breezes that strike like lightning flashes the lofty peaks of its triad mountain, the evening sun was setting. Sunset is always a thing of beauty in the tropics.

The first year of the Great War had passed, but yet there was no appearance of the end in sight. On the verandah of the Parish Rectory, in a back country district, a lone priest was seated. He was looking out on the warm scene that stretched before him, lighted by the last rays of departing day, the silence broken only by the shrill notes of a dusky laborer returning from his garden on the distant hillside and whistling as he made for his humble hut hid in the cocoa trees of his native village. In that little village behind the Presbytery this passing workman first saw the light. There he grew in all the simplicity of his surroundings and at the Catholic school of the village he got all the education he possessed. He had few cares and less sorrows—colored folk rarely have. Passing through the church grounds on his way home, still whistling “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary, It’s a Long Way to Go,” his eye caught sight of me as I sat musing, deep in thought over the strange events through which the world was passing.



"Good evening, Father," said the workman, lifting what remained of what was once a hat.

"Good evening, Wilson," I said. "Won't you come and have a talk?"

"'Tis late, Father," said the workman. "Is that today's paper? I heard at Cameron Cross that quite a lot of Boys are volunteering for the war; in fact, I thought of going myself."

"Well, Wilson," I said, "if you consider it your duty, the placards on the walls and trees say, '*Your Country Calls You*,' and as you are a British subject your duty seems clear. St. Rose and Travers and Brown enlisted today; they have just now been here. They told me that the street around the City Hall was crowded with men waiting for their turn to give in their names. In fact, Wilson," I said, "I have been thinking of volunteering as chaplain."

"You, Father?" said Wilson, his face opening like a colored cauliflower, as he burst into hysterics with laughter.

"Why do you laugh, Wilson?" I asked.

"You really mean it, Father?"

"Certainly."

"Then," said poor Wilson, "I'm going, too." And he kept his word.

Soon a thousand volunteers filled the Prince Alfred Building; more and more came in, till a complete regiment was in training. What a new, strange life for all those "*happy-go-luckys*," who never looked back on yesterday and were too jolly to think of tomorrow. There is no happier being on the whole broad face

of this world than the negro in his native element and uncontaminated by the vices of the white man.

The day of departure was fast approaching and Wilson, now trained in somewhat under the yoke of discipline, thought of nothing but the wonders of ocean traveling in a big ship and the beauties of London. He thought, too, of the future, when he would come back with all his experience; how the crowd would gather round him in the village to hear him unfold the tale of his travels.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon of Saturday, September 18, 1915, when the whistle blew and all the telephones of the Colony got busy. Government House, police depots, a rush and tumble everywhere, and the muffled rumor went around, "The transport Livanhilda is in the harbor." Every man to his kit! tumbling in his bare belongings. Mothers, wives, sweethearts surrounded the building, crying, calling, jostling, waving handkerchiefs. The police were kept busy in holding back the crowd.

At 3:30 P. M. marching orders were sounded. Out marched Company A, First (Ser.) Battalion, then B, C and D, headed by their respective C. O.'s. Alas! for the commanding officers. Some had had experience in the police force of the Colony and had some idea of the command of men. Most of the officers had been taken out of banks, warehouses, grocery stores and the Civil Service, with a letter of recommendation from some "big gun," a high up member of the "craft," and that was the sum total of their military experience. This selection of officers without military experience

could not be easily avoided. Things had to be rushed, and though many of the men had received a very superior education, yet the color question came into play. This, to my mind, was something to be regretted in such a crisis, when all went to arms for one common cause and, as it was made to appear, for the same noble purpose. However, I suppose there is no overcoming prejudice. We are all so small and narrow in our views. Let us hope that it may not be always thus, but that with time genius may be recognized in every man who has it, independent of race, or politics, or color.

Otherwise they were a fine lot of fellows. They sought commissions and got them galore, though the War Office lowered many in the ranks when they reached London.

The men, who were all colored, were taken from the different ranks of Colonial life. Some were highly educated and polished in manners. Some had not the advantage of a college training, but had gone through a first class primary school course. Some had come from good homes and respectable families; others, and those the greater number, from the humble walks of life. Many were of what may be called the low, or rough, class. Some grew up under the tender care of good and loving parents, and under the influence of religion, and so their lives were gentle and good, their conduct clean. Others, alas!—and these were very numerous—lived sensual and depraved lives, so common in Southern countries, and were already tainted with the evil results of their unholy alliances. As all



know, and most medical men admit, that once a man has fouled his body at the unclean shrine of Venus he is wholly unfitted for the strenuous life and onerous duties of a soldier. Yet such men passed the local medical examination. Yea, worse; the prison gates were opened at the connivance of the authorities, and condemned thieves, house-breakers and other criminals were let loose to swell the army of volunteers. What a horrible picture! The reader can judge of the misery bordering on despair, of carefully brought up youths, whose lives were straight and fair, herded on board ship and in a tent at the training camp with men whose depraved conduct had brutalized them, whose only thoughts were of sensuality, whose language was ever foul and blasphemous, and whose deeds were deeds of shame. War, however, makes this state of things inevitable, but it is none the less a terrible infliction to hear nothing from *reveille* in the morning till the sound of the "Last Post" and "All Lights Out" at night but blasphemy and language the very foulest. Add to this the foul air of a tent into which sixteen men were huddled together, some of them fetid wrecks of debauchery!

"Attention!" "Eyes front," "Form fours," "Form two deep." Then a final inspection of the men, their uniforms and packs. "Company A," cried the C. O., "form fours!" Companies B and C likewise, till the four battalions were formed in solid phalanx. "Eyes right!" (to salute the C.-in-C.), "Eyes front," "Quick march," and down the principal streets the regiment marched, followed by thousands who lined the way. Many a farewell cheer was raised, while mothers and

wives and near relatives stood silently, with streaming eyes and aching hearts, for well they knew that those they loved were marching to their death.


Carried out into the harbor on "tenders," the regiment was soon on board, the anchor was weighed, and the old transport steamed out by the third Boca.

The voyage to England was uneventful. Seasickness amongst the men was general, lasting in some cases throughout the whole voyage. The air was crisp and fresh on the morning we arrived at Plymouth. The men felt the cold, a feeling to which they were all unused down in their sunny home.

The men entrained for Seaford, where they were to go through their course of training. A battalion of men from another British possession was already there in camp. It may be of interest to state how a British regiment is made up. In a regiment there are about 4,000 men, made up thus: There are four battalions in a regiment, there are four companies in a battalion, there are four platoons in a company, and four sections in a platoon. In a section there are 12 men, more or less. In a platoon there are 48 men, generally more. In a company there are 250 men, and in a battalion there are generally 1,000 men, with one reserve company, called I Reserve. A battalion is generally commanded by a colonel or lieutenant colonel; a company is commanded by a major, captain or first lieutenant. Every company should have a sergeant-major, every platoon a first or second lieutenant and a sergeant. Every section is commanded by a sergeant, a corporal or a senior private. The whole regiment is commanded by a brigadier-general.

## CHAPTER III

### IN BLIGHTY

EAFORD is a charming watering place right on the sea, with a beautiful esplanade, which afforded the men a pleasant time in the evening after parade was over. The winter season was setting in and the cold soon began to prove fatal to many of the men, reared, as they had been, in a tropical clime. Deaths from pneumonia were so numerous that the War Office authorities ordered the regiment to Egypt to complete their training. In January, 1916, the First and Second battalions sailed for the land of the Pharaohs in the good old "Dongola."

The Church of England chaplain attached to our regiment was the Rev. Mr. Egan, an Irishman and a staunch Home Ruler. He was an elderly gentleman with all the genial qualities of his race. He loved the men and the men loved him, for he was truly a friend to all of them, without any narrow bigotry. He was just as interested in the Catholic Boys as in those of his own persuasion. I shall always cherish of him the happiest memory. Unfortunately he did not live long with us after his arrival in Egypt. The climate was too trying for a man of his years. He was to me a very true and sincere friend and companion in our visits to the sick and wounded. He was always most zealous to notify me when he found a Catholic soldier in danger of death. This good old man con-

tracted dysentery, to which he succumbed in a few days, and I am happy to say that he died a member of the True Fold. Rev. Mr. Egan was buried in the cemetery at Alexandria, Egypt, in March, 1916.

About the twenty-first of January, 1916, we left Southampton. The weather was cold, but the sun shone brightly and beautifully. A number of M. O.'s, nurses and hospital orderlies traveled with us, and to my great consolation another Catholic chaplain, an Irish Jesuit named Father Hartigan. He had come from a fine County Limerick family. He was young and zealous and of charming manner. We both said mass every morning on board and, as may be expected, were constant companions. Father Hartigan made the supreme sacrifice of his life later, somewhere in Mesopotamia, and I have no doubt is now enjoying the King's reward of the good and faithful servant in the ranks of Loyola's Sons in the Heavenly City.

Our first stop was at Malta, where we began to taste the warmth of southern skies. Malta, which derives its name from the Greek word *meletos*, meaning honey, because of its reputation for this product, is an island to the south of Sicily and looks, as one approaches, a solid mass of brown and gray granite. It was the headquarters during the war of the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, being an English possession since its surrender to Nelson in September, 1800. The island is 11½ miles long by 9½ miles wide and its population is about 205,000, ninety-nine per cent. of whom are Catholics. The great Apostle of the Gentiles was wrecked off the island of Malta at

a point which still bears his name, "St. Paul." He preached Christianity to the Maltese and converted them, leaving them St. Publius as their first Bishop. (Acts of the Apostles.)

The country is a beautiful scene, diversified by valleys and steep hills, though not a lake, nor river, nor brook is to be found in the whole island. The chief town, Valetta, is handsomely laid out, with its numerous churches, convents and hospitals and the almost constant chiming of bells calling the faithful to some devotion or procession. All the officers not orderlies for the day got leave and we spent a very pleasant time on shore. We sailed in the evening before sunset and Malta looked a beautiful picture. The light and shade of the setting sun giving rich colors to the granite rock and forts, while just as we sailed out of the harbor from the distance there came to us over the water the silvery tones of some convent bell, telling that one day more of our life had flown. It was the *Ave Maria* bell, warning Catholic maidens that the hour of night had come and the public streets were no longer their place. We gathered on the sides of the "Dongola" and long watched that beautiful isle of honey fade from our view, probably forever.



## CHAPTER IV

### ARRIVAL IN EGYPT



TWO full days' sail from Malta and we arrived in the harbor of Alexandria. Besides our delight at having reached our destination (as far as we knew), there was a peculiar pleasure at the prospect of looking into the faces of a people whose fathers lived at least 3,000 years before Christ. Every little bit of ancient history that we learned as school boys came back to us, from Moses in the rushes and Joseph in the treasury, down to the founder of the city that lay before us and bore his name—Alexander the Great—That once great city where St. Mark first preached Christianity, where St. Catherine confounded the pagan philosophers, where every sod of earth bore the print of saintly footsteps. There lived the great St. Clement of Alexandria, and St. Athanasius, and a long line of learned doctors.

The present Alexandria is a truly cosmopolitan city; almost every race and color under the sun is represented there, with their corresponding languages. The one language never spoken—outside the military—is English. The different Catholic rites of East and West find their place in Alexandria. Cops, Greeks, Armenians, Marionites, Syrians, Chaldeans and, of course, the Roman rite. The cathedral is dedicated to St. Catherine and is served by the Friars Minor of St.

Francis under a Vicar Apostolic, who is also Papal Delegate. The Protestants are few, composed mostly of the families of the English military. The Protestant Bishop, who bore the strange title of Bishop-in-Jerusalem, resided in Cairo.

The present Alexandria is situated on the ancient island of Pharos, whereas the original city stood on the mainland and was divided into the Jewish quarter, the Egyptian quarter and the Greek quarter. The temple to the god Serapis, still called the Serapeum, was in the Egyptian quarter. The present Alexandria, though not very striking in its appearance when viewed from the harbor, and its narrow, crowded and badly kept streets which the stranger meets on landing, makes a poor impression. However, when one enters the center of the city, especially the great square in front of the Law Courts and La Bourse, he feels as if in a European city, were it not for the fantastic dress of the Arabs and the melee of languages. French is the official language of Alexandria.

The officers landed at 11 A. M. and Father Hartigan, who spent some years in the Jesuit College in Beirut, spoke Arabic fluently and so acted as cicerone for us. Our first duty was to "report," Father Hartigan and I, to the Senior Catholic Chaplain, who resided at the Metropole Hotel, Third echelon. He was Father Felix Couturier, O. P. of the English Province of the Dominicans.\* He received us with

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\*Fr. Felix Couturier, O. P., has lately been raised to the Episcopal dignity and named Apostolic Visitor to Egypt. We wish His Lordship every blessing *ad multos annos*.

the greatest kindness and informed me that I would find my unit at Mex Camp, some seven miles outside the city. Father Felix was doing wonderful work for the Catholic soldiers. He had founded a club where the men took their recreations in the evening and were thus saved to some extent at least from the wickedness of one of the worst cities in the world. There is no abomination thought of, heard of, or written of, which is not perpetrated in Alexandria. It is hell let loose to Christians.

After "report" had been duly made, the officers rushed to the telegraph office to cable their safe arrival to wives and friends whom they had left sorrowing in far off homes. The hotels were all that could be desired, and so we were sumptuously regaled, waited on by dignified Arabs in their long flowing white dress, bound at the waist with red sashes. Lunch was all that we could desire at the Bovard Hotel, which was under Catholic management. We visited the principal business street, Rue Cherif Pacha, which was crowded with military officers of all ranks, providing themselves with kits, uniforms, everything from a needle and thread to bed, chair, table, cooking apparatus, mess tins, etc. The heat was pleasant at that season of the year—beginning of February—so we took a most enjoyable trolley ride from Ramleh to Sidi Bish, a distance of some twelve miles, right around EAST-PORT. More about Alexandria later on, before leaving Egypt for another field of battle.

## CHAPTER V

### MEX CAMP



MEX is to the east of the city and there is a good trolley service from the Rue des Soeurs along by Gabari and the Arab quarter, to within a good mile of the camp. Mex is situated on the sandy border of the great Salt Lake. It is in the desert. Sand, sand everywhere, even in the soldiers' tea. Oh! those long route marches through the soft, sifting sand will never be forgotten.

It was late in the afternoon when I reached the camp at Mex. The Boys were on parade, and the sentry on guard was Cpl. de Gannes, who was well known to me in the "land of the humming bird," and who then, as ever after, on every occasion, proved himself a true and faithful friend of the Padre. Corporal de Gannes introduced me to the genial major, the C. O. of his company. The major was not only a staunch Catholic, but it was his proud boast to be one, and he was a bright example of it, by his practical piety and fidelity to duty. The major's name was ever on the lips of the Boys a theme of praise. He took me to the C. O. of the First Battalion and to the adjutant, and I duly reported as Catholic Chaplain. The commanding officer, Colonel B., was an English gentleman in every sense of the word, and so I was received with the greatest courtesy. The colonel believed in two religions, Catholic and, as they call it in the army,

Church of England, but for fancy religions he had no time. I was agreeably surprised to see the great interest the C. O. took in the men, whom he seemed to know personally, and he expressed his pleasure in the appointment of a Catholic Chaplain. The colonel was not himself a Catholic, but being, as I said already, a *gentleman*, he had none of that insulting bigotry of which many Catholic chaplains had to complain. Quite the contrary, he listened to any complaint I had, or imagined I had, at any time. The Catholic chaplain in the British army has his place and his duties well defined and it is up to him to see that every reasonable facility be given to the Catholic men in the service, to assist at mass on Sundays and fulfil the other duties of their religion. The men, however, are under the control of their immediate company C. O., sergeants, major, etc., and orders given by these latter are sometimes in conflict with the orders of the chaplain. When these subalterns and N. C. O.'s are Protestants and bigots—worse still, and this is frequent—where they are ignorant, they take a pleasure in countermanding the wishes of the chaplain. This they do by making Catholic Boys mess-orderlies, sentries and put on fatigue work, on Sundays, to prevent their going to mass. The men cannot complain, they have to obey or go to the guard room. They have to listen in patient silence while their religion is insulted with such expressions, as I myself often overheard, "Your God damn bally priest won't boss me. Damn your bloody mass and communion. Will communion win the war for the allies," etc. These are the troubles



that call for the chaplain's attention ; he has to be up and doing, and if he wants to be what he is meant to be he must not allow a single slur on his religion to pass unheeded. When he makes his authority, in his own sphere of duty, felt, he will have no further troubles. Yes, he will be all the more respected by the superior officers and by the men. The C. O.'s of the First, Second and Third Battalions of our regiment at Mex gave no room for complaint ; every wish and order of the chaplains was always acted upon and no obstacle was ever raised in their way to the men. There were just two instances that occurred in which I deemed it my duty to complain, and my action had the approval of the Senior Catholic Chaplain.

An order was issued by the general officer commanding in Alexandria that all Catholic men of all the camps in Alexandria should be given facilities for attending High Mass on St. Patrick's Day in St. Catherine's Cathedral. I knew the order had been issued, but it did not appear in any of the battalion orders in our camp. The result was that I and my orderly were the only representatives of our regiment at the High Mass. I was the preacher of the occasion, and my orderly accompanied me to carry my soutane and surplice. The orderly was on his return locked up by company O. C., an ex-Protestant minister, endowed with all the bigotry he could command, because this Boy left the camp without leave. Let me say that the Chaplain in every English regiment has a right to the services of his orderly, to send him on messages, with a pass bearing his own signature, and to this end the

Boy is released from all other duty and parades. This privilege was refused me until the S. P. Chaplain had to insist. This C. O., however, thought better of his action; he apologized and released the Boy from the guard room. I went to the camp commandant and asked if an order from the G. O. C. permitting Catholic soldiers to attend mass in the Cathedral of Alexandria on St. Patrick's Day had reached the camp, and if so, had such order been sent to the First (Ser.) Battalion, — Regiment? The answer was in the affirmative and the number and date of the order were given me. I accordingly asked the adjutant why the Catholic men of our regiment were not made aware of the said order. Our amiable commandant answered that he regretted the matter and would have allowed the men to attend had he known they desired to do so. He considered that the Mex camp was too far from the city to expect the order to apply to us. The matter was then dropped. A few such incidents as this occurred from time to time, and the Chaplain was always satisfied with the explanations given.

Our adjutant was an Irish gentleman, an anti-Home Ruler with a slight taint of dislike for Catholics. In fact, he sometimes went out of his way to hash up the old calumnies against priests and religious, to sneer at confession and other Catholic practices, but otherwise he was a splendid officer. He was thoroughly acquainted with military discipline and did much to perfect the men in their training. Personally, I found him always ready to help me in every way, and I am still mindful of many kindnesses on his part. He left

our regiment later on and though I have never since heard of him I am sure that he won glory in the faithful and courageous fulfilment of his duty as a soldier—at least such is my hope.

I was not expected by the men, and parade over, the arrival of an old friend, a Padre, as Chaplain, who had labored among them, who knew their homeland conditions and who understood them, was a welcome event. There was a general gathering, especially of B Company, to shake hands and ask a hundred and one questions. However, night was coming on; I must have a shelter and the quartermaster was the man for that. He was a man of enormous proportions, *un véritable bon vivant*, as the French would say. He had the rank of first lieutenant, but somehow one did not take long to see that he had not been, *ab initio*, an officer. The French would hit him off well by saying, “il n’ était dans son assiette.” After a bit of bluff and huff and ha! ha! that he had not been apprised of my coming, I at last succeeded in getting a tent and a spot whereon to pitch it. The spot was at the end of the officers’ lines, in the middle of an Arab graveyard, the sunken tombstones serving as seats for the Boys. This sounds weird, but it did not feel so, *à la guerre comme à la guerre*. I was in full-fledged active service and “groussing” was out of place.

Willing hands made up my camp bed, placed on it my sleeping bag. My wash basin, which consisted of a square canvas bag hung on a tripod, and my canvas bucket were filled with water for the following morning. When all was ready the Boys sat around and

chatted until roll call, when with a real cheery good night and wishes that no Arab spirits would come to disturb my slumbers, the Boys retired to their respective lines, leaving me in my tent alone to enjoy my new, strange furniture and my first night in a military camp in Egypt.

The twilight in Egypt is short, but there still remained sufficient to take a look out from the opening of my tent. To the west was the city of Alexandria, north and east was the vast desert, hills of sand bounding the horizon; south was the great Salt Lake. The water of this lake has a peculiar purple hue that made one think that perhaps by some chance the blood of Pharaoh's army had oozed into it from the Red Sea. I confess I did feel lonely; the silence was awful and became intensified by the melancholy bugle notes of the "Last Post."\* I turned in, closed up the opening of my tent and made myself acquainted with the manner of getting into my sleeping bag. I prepared my altar for the next morning mass and after a short, fervent night prayer I went to a sleep which no spirits came to trouble. "Sleep, it is a gentle thing, beloved, from pole to pole." It is the greatest solace in a soldier's life, when his day's work is done, to welcome peace and rest in those visions of home and happy by-gones that come back to gladden him in midnight dreams.

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\*The "Last Post" is the farewell piece played over the grave of a buried soldier, and it serves as a meditation on death every night in camp.

## CHAPTER VI

### FIRST DAY IN ACTIVE SERVICE



THE mornings are fresh, even chilly, in Egypt in January and February, but a glaring sun bursts out towards midday. A heavy dew falls at night, which gives a feeling of weariness when one awakes. "Reveille" was sounded at 4 o'clock A. M., and in an instant the whole camp is alive. In this camp at Mex there were many regiments—English, South Africans, Australians and Irish, perhaps in all about 40,000 men. Every regiment had its own defined boundaries and it was rare to see one regiment fraternizing with another. Even battalions of the same regiment kept absolutely apart. The Australians were an exception; they were friendly to all, except to Tommy Atkins. Between the Australians and the English there was a deadly hatred. The same feeling was said to exist between the Canadians and English.

After the men rose from their sandy bed on the bare ground, they packed up their blankets and kits and put them in line out in front of their tents. Then they were given a biscuit and a cup of tea sweetened with syrup and they provided their own milk, when they were able to purchase it in the canteen. After this hurried breakfast they had parade and all were marched to the trenches. Here they worked, digging, filling sand bags, throwing hand grenades and all the



other hard work of training. I can assure the reader it is no joke. At 8 o'clock there was sick parade, that is, all who complained of one ailment or another had to see the M. O. It was absolutely in his power to decide whether a man was really sick or only "skrimshanking," or, as college boys would call it, "foxing." If the M. O. decided the latter, the unfortunate man was taken to the guard room, brought up before the C. O. of the battalion and sentenced to very severe punishment. How many fearful injustices were thus committed one can easily imagine. I remember one case of a Boy who went before the M. O., complaining of a headache. Without more than a look, the M. O. condemned him as a "skrimshanker," and he got eight days C. B. (confined to barracks), which also meant fatigue work while the others were resting, and many other inconveniences. The Boy went to his tent and laid down in the sand, and when they came to call him to his punishment they found him dead; yes, dead from acute spinal meningitis. Of course, it was all hushed up; who dares ask questions in active service knows the consequences. This was not an exceptional case. I saw an M. O., and a big one at that, kick a poor Boy unmercifully one morning because, forsooth, he reported sick! The Junior M. O. of the First Battalion was a very kind man and took the greatest care of the men. He was young and active and very much beloved by all. He left a very fine practice to join the army and his brilliant services were most generously given to all who consulted him. If he still lives, as I sincerely hope he does, I hope some

day to hear or read of his experiences. He was moved to the Third Battalion. This was the last I heard of the good medico.

While the men were at their early morning work I said my mass in my tent, served by my orderly. It may seem strange to one who has not experienced the feeling, but I never said holy mass with greater fervor than in my tent at Mex camp. Thanks to the kindness of the camp sergeant-major, who was a Catholic, I was provided with a second tent, one opening into the other by a real Gothic door especially designed by the Boys. One tent served me for work, for sleep and for entertaining the Boys, or being, more generally, entertained by them. The second tent was fitted up as a little chapel, with permanent altar, a small statue of the Sacred Heart and another of our Lady. A Catholic student from the Christian Brothers' College in Alexandria supplied us with a miniature Way of the Cross, and in all it was really devotional. There were always a few Boys at morning mass; Boys who for one reason or another were exempted from parade. My orderly, while being a perfect soldier, was excellently fitted for his duties as chaplain's orderly. He was well brought up, the son of a good family, and was a thoroughly clean Boy, which in army parlance has something of the Scriptural meaning of *Homo Justus*, a just man. He was popular among his fellows and so was never short of help on Sunday morning, when the whole furniture of our humble chapel had to be transferred to larger quarters, as we had always from 700 to 800 of our own men as well

as men from other regiments at mass. Leo, for such was his name, was my *fidus achates* through all my campaign in Egypt and later in East Africa, where he died of black water fever. I was not with the regiment when Leo died, but many beautiful and touching letters were written me about him by the men of his company who survived him. Leo's Padre wrote a simple epigraph which a companion placed on his grave. It was this:

Sacred Heart! most just and holy,  
Give my dear son Leo rest,  
Leave him not abandoned, lonely,  
Give him peace within Thy breast.  
He was young, a soldier brave,  
When he left Iere\* dear,  
And he won a hero's grave,  
Fighting nobly without fear.  
Now he's sleeping far away  
In Dark Africa's barren plains,  
Where no loving hand can lay  
Cross and crown o'er his remains.  
Lord! he's gone from war and woe  
To that silent, happy land,  
There protected from the foe  
By Thy kind and loving hand.  
There to see Thee face to face,  
With the angels and the saints,  
There to live in Thine embrace,  
Where no sin or sorrow taints.  
Friends and fellows beyond number

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\*Ancient name of his native land.

Leo! dear one, still remember  
Those whom thou'st left behind,  
In this world so cold, unkind.  
Fare-thee-well, but not for ever,  
Only till our turn shall come  
To be with thee, ne'er to sever,  
In our Father's Heavenly home.

R. I. P.

The great heat begins in March and the intensity of that heat I am not going to try to describe. The knives and forks at mess were so hot that one could hardly hold them. The men returned from work about 11:30 A. M., when they got the midday rations. The men sometimes complained, but later when we were on "iron rations" we all realized how well off we had been at Mex camp.

The climate of Egypt is considered temperate, because, in spite of the great heat, the air is very dry; rains and mists are very rare; but, as already remarked, the night dews are heavy. The strong southwest wind, the Sirocco, is prevalent in April and May. It rises suddenly and blows from the desert whirlwinds of sand which hide away the light of heaven and cover everything with a yellow hue. The heat during the time of these winds is suffocating and parches everything. The tea, the meat, bread, everything one eats is saturated with sand. And then the flies. Oh! millions and millions of them; but in active service one has only to close his eyes and the jaw bone does the rest. The sand is filled with lice, a thing I could never

explain, and this was a cause of great suffering to the men.

The word Egypt comes from an Ethiopian word signifying the land of canals, the gift of the Nile. The river Nile forms itself at Khartoum and is about 6,000 miles in length, thus making it the longest river in the world. Every year the Nile overflows, rising in June and reaching its height in October, and the slime thrown out by the water acts as a fertilizing substance and gives all the rich vegetation so plentiful in Egypt.

It is in all a wonderful country, overflowing with most interesting history, bequeathing to us those magnificent monuments—the pyramids of Ghizeh, Kephren and My Kerinos, as well as its famous Phare, or lighthouse, one of the seven wonders of the world and from which all other lighthouses of the world derive their name; for it takes its name from the island of Pharos, on the eastern extremity of which it stands.



## CHAPTER VII

### A VISIT TO THE PYRAMIDS



ALEXANDRIA was founded by Alexander the Great, about the year 331 B. C., on the site of Raeondal, a small village inhabited by shepherds and Phoenician sailors. Alexandria was one of the first cities of the world, not only intellectually, but also commercially. To the east of the city is the Grand Port and the Royal city, with its palace, temples, museum, library, theater and Cleopatra's Needle. To the west is the quarter called Khakalis, the center of the Egyptian population. This quarter contains the Serapeum, the Diocletian column and the "City of the Dead," with its numerous gardens and establishments for embalming the dead. At his death Alexander bequeathed Egypt to one of his lieutenants, Ptolemy Soter, to whom he owed his life when in Asia. Alexandria was a city that became the victim of countless internal conflicts and it became utterly ruined in the year 640, and so it remained for centuries. In 1517 it was taken by the Turks, who desecrated its once sacred soil, and from them it was seized by the French under St. Louis. On the second of July, 1798, Alexandria was taken by Napoleon and finally by the English, under Hutchinson, in 1801.

In the year 969 Egypt fell under the power of the Sultans Fatimites of Moghrel. The general of this order had a town constructed called El Kahira, now

Cairo, on the banks of the Nile. Cairo, the capital of Egypt, is perhaps the most handsome town of the East, having a population of 586,400. Like Alexandria, it has beautiful churches, mosques, museums, but its all important boast is the possession of the wonderful Pyramids, Cheops, Khefreu and My Kerinos. The construction of Cheops dates as far back as the year 5000 B. C., so at least we are told.

The word Pyramid is derived by some from the Arabic, and by others from the Greek word *pyr*, meaning *fire*, as the Greeks believed that the Pyramids were dedicated to the sun. Christians, however, prefer the derivation from *pyros*, which means *wheat*, because Christian tradition holds that the Pyramids were the granaries of Joseph, where he stored supplies during the years of plenty for the years of famine which followed. In appearance the Pyramids look like an immense rock of granite of a half yellowish, half gray color, somewhat like the sand of the desert.

In the center of Cheops is an entrance about four feet in width, leading into a straight passage which descends about 100 feet into an open gallery. This gallery or chamber, which has a rough, unfinished appearance, is said to be the oldest mortuary of the Pyramids. In a chamber into which this opens through a narrow corridor, the royal mummy was placed, and hence it is called the Queen's Chamber. Nine granite pillars support the ceiling of this chamber, which itself supports several low chambers. From the top of Cheops, though a tough job to climb, there is a beautiful view, looking down on the Nile flowing through

vast verdant plains, while in the distance appears the city of Cairo nursed in the bosom of its palaces, mosques and gardens. I was told that this view has an unearthly charm when colored with soft rose and violet tints by sunset.

The Sphinx looks like some nameless monster, crouching one time like a lion at rest, again like a human face of a man—never of a woman; and as one looks intently it seems to assume the look of a ram. The Sphinx measures 51 feet in height and 114 feet in length. The Egyptians say the Sphinx represents the god Harma Kouli, whoever he was. Whatever it is, or whatever its origin, there stands the Sphinx, with its unchangeable frown, as though it had been thrown down haphazard at creation, and in spite of the wind and the sand and the smells and the countless pilgrims of all ages who have viewed it with wonder, there it is, calm and awe-inspiring in its silent serenity.


Though last, not of least interest to us Catholics is the sycamore tree outside Cairo, under whose shade the Virgin Mother took shelter in her flight into Egypt, and where the soft water still flows in which she bathed the Divine Child. The story tells that those waters, thus sanctified, cleansed the leprous child who became in after years the dying thief on Calvary and whom the lips of the dying Saviour absolved and canonized. In spite of its strange color, I was happy to drink of that water.

The day of our visit to the Pyramids was pleasant and beautiful, and long would we have lingered amid

scenes that seemed to rise like spectres from the past, but the everlasting begging of children in rags and the perpetual wail for Backsheesh! Backsheesh! (money) forced us to shorten our stay and return to cooler, if more modern scenes, at Shepherds' Hotel, Cairo.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RELIGION IN THE ARMY

N THE British army every regiment has a Chaplain, Catholic or Protestant—Protestant *always*, Catholic and Protestant when the number of Catholics is manifestly in the majority, as always happens in so-called Irish regiments. During the war the government was most generous, it must be said, in supplying Catholic Chaplains, and the demand was at all times great. Every Catholic priest entered the army as Chaplain, with the rank and pay of captain. Great sacrifices were made by Bishops to supply priests, and the Religious Orders, particularly the Jesuits and Redemptionists, strained every effort to give their priests to the service. I met a great number of Chaplains, particularly in Egypt and Salonika, and every one had the same complaint, with one exception, and he was an English Jesuit whose battalion C. O. was a splendid Catholic and took an honor in serving the Chaplain's mass every morning. The complaint was, "I cannot do my duty to the men. I am hampered and prevented at every turn. In the hospitals I am accused of disturbing the patients, of raising their temperature. Yet I must hear the confession and give the Last Sacraments to a man who is in danger of death." Another great difficulty which the Catholic Chaplain had to meet was that the S. P. Chaplain was often a non-Catholic who ignored the work



of the Catholic Chaplain. He was piqued by the number of converts to the Catholic faith and the extraordinary efforts of Catholic soldiers to be faithful to the duties of their religion, the great numbers who attended mass on Sundays and the few who attended Protestant services and the force that had to be employed to make even the few to be present. Here again we were blessed in Egypt by our having as S. P. C. a gentleman of excellent qualities, who, though not a Catholic, recognized the duty of Catholic Chaplains and Catholic men. He was always affable, most agreeable, ever ready to receive and most just to all. It was always a pleasure to call on him and one saw at once his high appreciation of our work. I never heard of a single complaint against this gentleman from any Chaplain. Personally, I had reason to be grateful to him on more than one occasion. These will give an idea of the Chaplain's difficulties.

In the British army two religions are officially recognized, Catholic (R. C.) and Protestant (C. of E.). The essence of the Protestant religion, if there is any essence in it, consists of being present at divine service on Sunday. I have never, of course, assisted at a Protestant service, but if what one hears on deck on board ship is a sample it consists of some sermon or reading, with the singing of hymns. Whereas, for us Catholics the very source and center of our Faith is the Holy Mass, which is a repetition of what our Lord did after He had taken His Last Supper with His disciples on the night before He died. Jesus took bread, He blessed it and broke it, saying, "This is

My Body," at which instant, our living, abiding faith tells us, the whole substance of the bread was changed into the whole substance of the Body of Christ. At mass the Catholic priest, by the power of Christ that is in him, does the same thing, effects the same mystery—he changes the substance of bread into the Body of Christ and the substance of wine into the Blood of Christ. Those who differ from us may sneer at this and ask, like the Jews, How can a priest change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ? How can this man give us His Flesh to eat?"

But that is our belief, *that* is our Divine Service, that Wonderful Mystery. And this belief is not one merely of yesterday or today; it has been the belief of the Church from the first Holy Thursday night. The first Ecumenical Council of Nice in the year 325 says of the mass: "Here at the divine table we must not view as bread and wine that which is set before us, but we must lift up our spirit and *know* in faith that the Lamb of God lies on that holy table, that Lamb which takes away the sins of the world and which has been immolated by the priest in an unbloody manner." The singing of hymns and the sermon and all the other ceremonies are ceremonies only—the one thing, the great thing, the whole thing, is the mass—doing what Christ did. Now, surely, the Catholic who believes in this mystery has a right to be present at it at least on the Lord's own day, Sunday, and has a right not to be prevented from being present at an act which he absolutely, with the very hope he has of Heaven, believes to be the Son of God, Jesus Christ, coming down on

the altar and offering Himself to his eternal FATHER for His people. That, I say, is the mass which we Catholics so highly prize and to be present at which we strain every point. This precisely is what Protestants do not and will not understand. This is why the army Chaplain has so often to make trouble and get himself into trouble with his superior officers to get facilities for his flock to go to mass on Sundays and to feed their souls frequently on the Flesh of Jesus Christ—just because He said,, “Except you eat My Flesh and drink My Blood you shall not have life in you.” Then, again, the mass is only one article of our Catholic faith. We also believe that the priest is the ambassador of Christ and as such has the power to forgive sin. “Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain they are retained.” Hence the Catholic soldier must go to confession. “Let a man prove himself” before appearing at the tribunal of God’s judgment, and before receiving the Flesh and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion.

Every Sunday morning we had church parade for all the regiment, each battalion on its own ground and inspected by the C. O. The different officers stood to attention in front of their respective companies. Inspection over, the command was given, “Roman Catholics fall out.” The Catholics then formed fours and marched to the place for mass, while the regimental band played the Church of England men to their place of worship with such airs as “Daisy Bell,” “Who Were You With Last Night?” “At Trinity Church I

Met My Doom," "It's a Long Way to Tipperary." This last air was dropped after the Irish Rebellion of 1916. One strict rule in the British army is that no man or bugler or drummer can be compelled to be present at a service other than his own by profession. Here the Chaplain has again to see that Catholic men, members of the band, must not be present at Protestant service. By King's Regulations, it must be arranged that Catholics, while they may play as far as the door of the hut where Protestant services are held, must be allowed to attend mass. To prevent misunderstandings, I did not begin mass until the Catholic musicians arrived. Whether by accident or design, every Sunday there were more Catholics employed as mess-orderlies, on sentry and fatigue, than of any other denominations. No use complaining about it, for the invariable answer was, "It cannot be helped." At one time in our regiment Sunday was thrown in for musketry as well as the week days. That, I was told, could not be helped, either, but on my reporting the matters at G. H. Q. it *was* helped, and stopped for ever after.

I rarely had cause for complaint in the regiment to which I was attached as Chaplain, at least while in Mex camp, but there were many evidences of bigotry which had I noticed and complained of would only have made new troubles for the Catholics. Moreover, I believe it does good to any Catholic to have to fight and overcome difficulties that are put between him and the practice of his religion. One fact is, and I am not alone in my opinion, religion is not wanted

in the army. It is fashionable to have a Chaplain; he is more or less necessary to complete the staff of the regiment—some one to conduct the Sunday service. But outside of that he has no place. Referring to difficulties put in the way of Catholic soldiers attending mass, as an instance of how the Chaplain can be baffled in his efforts, I shall give one example. One Sunday morning a certain sergeant-major detailed fourteen men to sweep out the theater of the camp for Protestant service, and twelve of them were Catholics and were all going to communion that morning. The men represented this circumstance to the N. C. O., but no use; the usual answer, "To h—— with your communion." The men asked to be allowed to begin work at once, so as to be in time for mass, but this was refused. They were obliged to wait until mass began and then they were sent to work. Had I complained it would have been the men's word against the officer, a thing that would not be accepted.

Now we have peace, which we all hope may never be broken, though there are twenty-three wars going on as I write these lines.

However, I repeat that I was, as far as my Chaplain's duties were concerned, much better off than most Chaplains whom I met. I always received at the hands of my brother officers, among whom there were only two Catholics, the greatest respect, with just one exception. Being the only Irishman in the officers' mess, I had a good deal to suffer from insulting remarks on the occasion of the Irish Rebellion. My ears often tingled as I heard from a captain at



a table near where I sat such expressions as, "These bloody Irish, they want another Cromwell to blow the whole bloody crew out of existence. These people are sunk in papish superstition." However, I possessed my soul in patience and bore the humiliation for the sake of those brave and noble men who shed their blood for the freedom of their country. The cabled news we got was scant, but amongst the names of those sentenced to death, *that Ireland might live*, was one whom there was no mistaking, De Valera! I knew him when he was a boy, brilliant and beaming amongst the galaxy of his fellow students, the modest, retiring youth whose name alone made him remarkable in an Irish school. It did seem sad to me, then, to see him in the spring of his life standing before a squad of English barbarians with his life blood flowing over the green sward of the land he loved. Providence had willed it otherwise; he was saved. The blood of the martyred patriots, McDonough, Pearce, and the others who died in that Easter rising gave a new life to Ireland, a new wave of universal patriotism swept over Ireland, the shamrock grew with fresher green on that Easter springtide, and like that triple leaf, in one stem united, was the clasp of every Irish hand in freedom, fealty and friendship. Today Ireland is a republic, and De Valera, the criminal and traitor in the eyes of England, but Ireland's pride and glory, is touring America, the proclaimed President of the Republic of Ireland.

In the unprecedented war that has, let us hope, come to an end, religion played an all-important part.

The Catholic men would not have enlisted if they had not been guaranteed the ministrations of a priest. There were, of course, exceptions; there are and will be always some indifferent Catholics, as there were bad angels; but the vastly greater number were believing Catholics who volunteered in the late war. Amongst the Catholics of my regiment I do not believe there was even one per cent. who could be called bad Catholics. They went to confession and holy communion regularly, and their Sunday mass and sermon was the greatest consolation. During Lent we had the Rosary in common every night; on Wednesdays and Fridays the Way of the Cross, and on Sundays and Thursday Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. These were called voluntary services as opposed to the obligatory assistance at divine service every Sunday. The Protestant men loved to assist at mass, and by some trick of their own there were always a hundred or more Protestants at Sunday mass.

The greatest event that occurred at Mex camp was our Confirmation of some 85 Boys, 56 of whom were converts. It took place in St. Catherine's Cathedral, Alexandria. The officiating Bishop was Monsignor Brianti, Apostolic Delegate. It was indeed a great day and every kindness and facility were shown us by the Commandants of the different battalions to enhance the ceremony. Every Catholic man in the camp off duty was allowed to be present at the Confirmation. The colonels commanding the First and Second Battalions and several officers honored us with their presence at the ceremony and afterwards at lunch.

Here deservedly must be mentioned the name of Brother Peter, the tireless assistant of every Chaplain in all his needs. Was it altar wine or hosts that were wanted or a special purchase to be made—anything and everything was done for us by Brother Peter of the de la Salle Bros. I often thought of the Scriptural text, "Go to Joseph," but in Alexandria it was "Go to Peter." On the occasion of the Confirmation I went to Peter to ask what could be done in the way of providing a lunch for the Boys. There were to be 400 present. "Come along," said the good brother, and he took me to the orphanage of the Sisters of Charity (Filles de St. Vincent de Paul). The Superioress was kindness itself, and the whole thing was settled there and then. Needless to say, it was a banquet and not a lunch, prepared with an exquisitely French taste. There was a special table laid for the officers present, and I think the unanimous verdict was, "That *was* fine"—thanks to Brother Peter and the good Sisters of Charity.


The convent garden was put at the disposal of the men after lunch; they rested, smoked, had their photos taken, etc. At 3 o'clock P. M. we had Benediction in the Convent Chapel, with renewal of the baptismal vows. Finally after a most enjoyable day, the best of which was given to God in a general communion that morning, we returned to the camp, pleased with everyone and with ourselves.

It is thus that the Catholic chaplains worked to keep the men together and by the practice of Catholic devotions to make strange countries strikingly like the

home which the men had sacrificed to the call of duty. These were the pleasant days, those days at Mex; the dark days had yet to come. When they did come, we faced them true and brave, and though some fell by the wayside in the onward march they found rest where only the faithful Catholic shall find it—in God. Those remaining of us kept marching on, strengthened and encouraged and comforted by our holy Catholic faith. We have gone through unscathed—*Te Deum laudamus!*

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CHAPLAIN IN THE HOSPITAL

F ALL the consoling works of an army Chaplain during the war, and they were many, after the consolation of Holy Mass there was none greater than the sweet, if often sad, comfort that filled his soul and forced, in spite of all resistance, those soothing tears to his eyes, which, when wiped away, bring such quiet spiritual enjoyment. Perhaps the word enjoyment is out of place in speaking of spiritual consolation, but the peculiar feeling of the Catholic priest sitting by the bed of pain, with the trembling hand of the suffering child of Christ held in his, and that wistful look, more eloquent than any words, which seems to say, "Father, you are all that remains to me now. In you, after God, rests my last remaining hope." This feeling delights the heart as well as the soul of the priest.

Oh! how many touching memories crowd back upon me now as I recall my daily visits to the hospitals in Alexandria. The moment I entered a ward every head was raised and an electric smile from every face greeted me as I appeared at the door. There was no distinction there. Protestants as well as Catholics welcome, even look forward to the Padre's visit. Yet there is a great difference in the greeting; the Catholic feels that the priest is his own, his own by right, and that peculiar little Catholic squeeze of the hand, accom-



panied with a sweet, shy little smile, has something of the Master's meaning when He said, "I know mine and mine know Me. Feed My lambs." I often thought that though the Protestant men were always glad to see the priest they seemed to see or feel that they were not really of the priest's household. This I often remarked when distributing creature comforts, for which I owed much to Brother Peter and the excellent young men of his Catholic Club. The Catholic Boys took their share as children would take bon-bons from their mother, the most natural thing in the world; while the Protestant Boys took theirs as a great kindness on the part of the priest. It was that childlike-ness on the part of Catholics to their priest that impressed the non-Catholics and was their first attraction to the True Faith.

One day when making my rounds, with my hand-bag filled with cigarettes, a wounded soldier, a nice young fellow only twenty-two years old, said to me as I was leaving his bed: "Sir, what must I do to be a Catholic like those fellows over there?" "You must first pray," I said, "and then when convinced of the truth of our religion, apply to your Commanding Officer." "Sir," he said, "I was never baptized. My father was a Protestant and a Free Mason and before he died he asked me to promise him that I would never be baptized." "No such promise," I said, "could bind you. You belong to God before your father, and God's Eternal Son, Christ, said, 'Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' Better not discuss the

question further ; pray and God, who is your Heavenly Father and loves you more than any earthly father could love his son, will guide you right." I left him and at my next visit I saw him with a Catechism, and a Catholic Boy sitting at his bed. He recovered from his wound, was baptized, made his First Communion and Confirmation on Ascension Thursday, 1916. This young man was afterwards killed within view of the Holy Land at the taking of Jerusalem, and I hope he is today in his destined place in the true Jerusalem on high.

There was another non-Catholic man, in rank a sergeant. He was suffering a great deal from a complication of complaints. Naturally the poor fellow's nerves were broken and so he gave great trouble to the nurse in charge of his ward. I went to his bed one day, but he refused to speak to me. All my coaxing and efforts to soothe him were in vain, though I could not help seeing that he was well educated and tenderly reared. A few days later, passing through the ward, I stood at the foot of our friend's bed. "Good day, sergeant," I said, "how do you feel today?" "Always the same," he answered. "I cannot lie down. I would suffocate if I did." I had a rosebud in my hand which I plucked in the convent garden on my way to the hospital. "That is a nice rose, sir," he said. "Yes. Would you like to have it?" "Well, if it's not depriving you I would." "With all my heart," I said, "you must have it. Do you like flowers." "I just love flowers." "Well, then," I said, "I shall bring a flower every day, if I may?" "You are too good,

sir," said the poor Boy. From that moment we became friends and he told me a beautiful story about his life. He became a Catholic and a thoroughly good one. The day before we left Mex camp I went to say goodbye. He was very ill with dysentery. I gave him the Last Sacraments at his own request and I took from my neck my own little crucifix and gave it to him, saying, "Keep this near you and kiss it often, and if you should die ask them to put it with you in the coffin. Somehow," I said, "I feel you will recover this time, but whether on earth or in heaven, I shall always remember you. Won't you sometimes think of me?" He made no answer; the tears welled into his large, dark eyes. I left him then. Some few weeks later, while the Turks were shelling us at Ismailia, a letter was handed me while I sat under the shelter of a sand hill behind the convent hospital. It was from my friend who loved flowers, and here is what he said:

"MY DEAR FATHER:—I really cannot tell you how much I have missed you since you left. Your visits even when I was at my worst used to have such a cheery effect on me. I used to feel quite a different being while you were with me and I used to look forward to those visits, I can tell you. Further than that, you used to be so nice to me I shall never forget you; and the crucifix you so kindly stripped yourself of for my benefit shall ever remain in my possession as a lasting memento of our acquaintance.

"I have a bit of news to give you, something you prophesied. The nurse told me about twenty minutes

ago that in all probability I am to be invalided home. I wonder what you are doing now? Sometimes I try to picture you killing out yourself in that roasting sun of Suez. In the event of your being able to write, address the letter to ————. Well, ta! ta! Father, and God reward you for all the good you have done me in many ways. He knows I am grateful.”

It was months before I could sit down in quiet to write to anyone. When able, I answered the above letter, addressing it to my friend's home. His father, an Anglican clergyman, answered:

“Your to ————, dated 26/6/17, I have, of course, opened and read it. The poor Boy left us on January the 4th, after spending seven weeks in bed. The doctor certified his death as due to valvular disease of the heart. Father ———— of ———— came up to see him a few days before his death and administered the last rites of the Church to him. He was always speaking of you and wished to write but couldn't. He asked Father ———— to try and get into touch with you. He was buried in our church yard here and we placed the crucifix you gave him in his hand. \* \* \* \*”

The reader will pardon me for this long story, but it is typical of hundreds of others which I could relate. Here my memory is helped by having preserved this letter, but would that I could tell some of the loving messages—death messages spoken in broken words, and with parched lips, with the last life drops oozing away on the field, in the trench or in the hospital, by many a dying hero—yes, in that last hour, far, far away

from the home of childhood and the love of mother and wife, far from the old church and the school house, and the green field where he played in youth, God's priest was near him, to hear his last whisper of contrition, to be the bearer of his last message, "Write to my mother; tell her \* \* \* \* "

On one occasion I sat by a dying officer. He was wounded in both thighs and I think he was dying principally from loss of blood. I had given him the Last Sacraments, which he received with great fervor. His eyes were filled with tears and I spoke a few words of encouragement to him. "Major," I said, "have no fear of God. He is your good, kind, merciful Father." He put his hand to his eyes and brushed away the tears. "No, Father," he said, laying his hand on mine, "I am not afraid of the good God; but," and he paused for a moment, "I am ashamed of Him." This seemed to me the most beautiful act of contrition I had ever heard.

These are some of the what I may call natural consolations, but what shall I say of those spiritual consolations which priest and soldier experienced in that sacred home of mercy, within whose sacred precincts not even angels are permitted to enter? That hallowed house where the door is closed on the dearest friend and closest acquaintance, where the poor, sin-weary, wounded soul is alone, all alone with God in the person of the Catholic priest. The soul in ecstasy, while a father's hand with loving gentleness takes out the thorns one by one. The other, the *alter Christus*, sitting where he is sworn as Christ's vicegerent to speak



no hasty word, pouring his Master's saving Blood into the wounds which sin had made and bidding the penitent rise and go with all the power of the High God, "Arise, go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee." Perhaps in heaven we shall have words which fail us now to tell the joy which flooded the soul of a Catholic chaplain when, in death's drear hour, on the night before a battle, he raised his hand over many a lonely soldier, who perhaps for years had forgotten God and had wandered far from the path of piety and his mother's warning words, and spoke the impressive, awful words, EGOTE ABSOLVO.

In speaking of the chaplain in the hospital, I feel I would be wanting did I not speak a word of the devotedness, the unceasing care and kindness shown to the sick and suffering, the wounded and broken wrecks of humanity by the doctors and nurses. The head doctor in the Egyptian government hospital in Alexandria while I was in charge there as Chaplain was a Major Eakins. I can never forget his untiring zeal, devotion and self-sacrifice in behalf of the suffering under his care. I know not when he took his rest, but at whatever hour of the night or day that I visited the hospital, there was the major, always in his working uniform, always wearing the same friendly smile, always ready to do his share in comforting, healing, and restoring to health the bruised and broken as he cheered the friendless and forgotten. The nurses were wonderful in their attention, and the extraordinary labors they endured and the sacrifices they made were beyond anything one might have expected.


Of course, one met occasionally a sour-faced Protestant, who gave a kind of snarl at a priest when the screen around the bed was asked for, which was, as far as I noticed, rare. For as time went on all understood when the priest was giving the Last Sacraments to one of his flock. To show how sharp some non-Catholics were, I shall give just one instance. I had heard the confession and given Extreme Unction to a man very ill with pneumonia. I had not the holy Viaticum with me and promised to bring it next morning. Later in the evening a Church of England chaplain—there was no mark on the uniform to distinguish him from a Roman Catholic Chaplain—visited the same ward. The Catholic Boy, who remembered something which he had forgotten at the moment of his confession, beckoned to the clergyman and said, "Father, I would like to confess." He had the audacity to sit on that Boy's bed and hear his confession. Being ignorant of the form or the manner of giving absolution, he made some sign which the sick boy did not notice and the Church of England Chaplain left. There was a Protestant in a bed quite close, and when the clergyman had turned his back he whispered aloud, "Say, Vas Concellas, [that was the Catholic Boy's name] that was no priest, he is not on the job. Why, he didn't know how to absolve you." When I came with Holy Communion the following morning I heard what had happened and learned that in very truth the Protestant Boy was quite right in his diagnosis.

I am loath to leave off talking of the hospital and the Chaplain there during the Great War. I could go

on *ad infinitum* telling of touching incidents, but I must not tax the patience of the reader. So, best wishes and congratulations to all our noble heroes who have lived through it all. May God's eternal peace and light shine on the souls of all who died that the world might be better, "a decent place to live in, a world safe for democracy." Let us hope they have not died in vain—*qui vivra verra*.

## CHAPTER X

### OFF TO ISMAILIA

NE evening as regimental orders came out there was the usual rush to the board and one of the orders read, "By 8 o'clock tomorrow morning all tents down and the regiment under marching orders." All manner of surmises were made as to where we were moving, but no one of the rank and file knew with any certainty. There was an air of sadness in all the camp; not that there was any cowardice—far from it; all wanted to get into the thick of it—but we had begun to feel at home in Mex. The following evening we entrained in Alexandria, still ignorant of our destination, but the engineer and the conductor had their orders

About 5:30 the next morning our train stopped in the middle of a great desert. There we found a camp of about 10,000 Australians who had finished their training and were going to embark for France. There was the usual hubbub among the men when, suddenly, Bomb! bomb! bomb boomed! boulders of shrapnel began to fly in all directions; the men fell flat on the ground—but what was it? Alas! our first baptism of fire! The Turks or Germans, or both together, threw bombs on the camp from the sky. We were about two miles from Ismailia. Ismailia is a decayed town, composed of one street, and quite abandoned, save for the military, who were there in great numbers. The

French, who were employed on the Suez canal, had their headquarters in Ismailia and had there a very fine club which was open to all military officers. Everything was conducted in the French club, as may be expected, in first class style. The meals, while not luxurious, were excellent; all indoor recreations, such as billiards, etc., found their place in the club. The Catholic church, the only church I noticed there, is in the hands of the good Franciscan Fathers, who were all French. The church was small but devotional. Ismailia itself, in the distance, resembles a green oasis on the limpid waters of the lake.

The Turks had reached the other bank of the Suez canal, which for a time was in imminent danger of being taken. One would naturally ask, which is the other side of the canal? The canal opens at Port Said on the Mediterranean to the north, and empties into the Red Sea at Suez at the southern end. The west bank is in Egypt and the east bank in Arabia. Ismailia is on the Egyptian side on the west bank. Port Said was practically in the enemy's hands, from which they marched along the bank to Ismailia, but at no time did they succeed in crossing the canal. Port Said did not exist before the construction of the canal, and whatever prosperity it possesses is owing to its being the gateway in the Mediterranean for the merchant highway to all the large vessels carrying their products from Australia and the Far East into Europe. Port Said has a population of about 40,000. It is steeped in vice the most revolting, and is generally spoken of by travelers as the most wicked spot on earth. How



far this is true I cannot say, but if it is worse than Alexandria and Cairo it is beyond description.

The battle at Ismailia was carried on for some three weeks with almost incessant fury. A fine hospital, conducted by the French Sisters of Charity, stood on an immense hill on the west bank of the Canal. From behind this hill the British fired and be it said to the credit of the Turks, they did not injure a stone of the convent or hospital. The Sisters moved for safety to the town of Ismailia, about four miles distant. General Murray, if I remember well, was C. in C., though General Maxwell, who was later the cruel instrument in the hands of England for doing to death the Irish rebels, was also in Egypt at the time. Finally the Turks were repelled from the Canal and fled in wild helter skelter into the desert, pursued by Australian forces, who there, as elsewhere, were the bravest fighters in the British army. They had the lion's share in that battle, and though their losses were great in the first days, they drove the Turks about 20 miles back. The English regiments, as was their wont everywhere, brought up the rear. The next great encounter was at El Arish, in which our Third Battalion had a large part.

As the Turks were driven back we crossed the Canal and took up our quarters at Stage Camp, about six miles back of the advanced trenches. Our men went in turn by companies into the trenches for ten days at a time, when the survivors returned, and were replaced by fresh troops. At some distance from us an English regiment was encamped. There they were

resting on their oars, wearing their poorly deserved honors when one morning the whole regiment was surrounded by the Turks while men and officers were sleeping and the whole 4,000 were taken prisoners; the officers, it was said, being taken in their pajamas. The labor at Stage Camp in the excessive heat was terrible on our men, who were put to do the most menial work. The Canal is crossed by means of a large punt, laden with automobiles, people, military and camels as well as the stores, carried to the camp. This punt was pulled across by means of a cable, that had to be dragged inch by inch by hand. Paid Egyptian laborers did this at first, then the men of our regiment, because they were colored, were put at the work. How often I pitied those young fellows, many of them, all unaccustomed to labor, fainting from fatigue and hunger under the roasting sun doing this slavery; but I was powerless to help them in any way. One day a squad of Australians, who classed wonderfully well with the men of our regiment, marched down in a body to the Canal and ordered our men off the work. The order was obeyed and the officers did not interfere, for the English were in mortal dread of the Australians. As long as the Australians remained in the Camp, our men had afterwards a fairly good time. Alas! and we all regretted it, one early morning the Australians were ordered to France, and the hard times began once more. We were all heartily tired of the desert, and sand, and camels; to use an army expression, "We were fed up with it." We were all the time on half rations, the other half being supplied by flies.

An incident that came under my notice one day may be worth while mentioning to show how some men were made to suffer. Returning to the camp one day from the Canal I saw some men at work on the road and noticed that they were quarreling; that there was bad blood somewhere. The corporal was swearing to beat the band, and two young fellows whom I knew well, were scowling wickedly. Those two young men came from British Guiana, and were sons of very respectable families. The corporal had been a convict in Demerara, and had been released to join the army—Kitchener's army, as they called it. Knowing the conditions at home of the two privates, he took a special delight in making them scrape up the manure from the road, and in goading them into rebellion, that he might have the pleasure of putting them in the guard room. The tyranny oftentimes perpetrated by many N. C. O.'s drove otherwise well-intentioned men to desperation. This case was rare in our regiment, but such things did occur. I do not, of course, find fault with an N. C. O. who *had* to use his authority to get work done, but in many cases that authority was abused by men who had never obeyed themselves, and therefore did not know what authority meant, nor how to command their fellow-men, their subordinates only through circumstances.

The life of a soldier is a life of constant change, and there is no one who has to practise detachment as he has. He soon learns that if he wishes to be happy he must allow no ties to bind him to place or person. To-day here, tomorrow there. His heart may have many

a resting place, but nowhere a home. He must not fail to press forward though others fall behind. All the months that our lives had been thrown together in hardship and ease, in joy and in sorrow, had made us, chaplain and men, like one family. In the chaplain's hut at evening, when the Boys assembled there, all the quarrels of the day were settled, every burden was laid down and all left the Padre at night, always feeling that if a soldier's life had its troubles it had also its joys. We all remember the old saying, "The longest day will have an end," and "The dearest friends must part." Yes, for us, too, came a parting of the ways.

A detachment of 700 of our regiment was asked for the East African campaign, another theatre of the war. Others had to return to Mex, others to Serapeum, and the remainder somewhere in Mesopotamia. I volunteered to accompany the East African contingent. At first the Senior Principal Chaplain demurred, but he finally recognized my reasons, and he consented to my going from Egypt. In the contingent there were 465 Catholics, and surely that was a number sufficient to warrant the presence of a chaplain.

The parting was a bitter one. It was at the depot in Ismailia. The train went off, carrying some thousand or more men, with whom we had lived and labored long, and we, the East African contingent, stood on the burning sand straining our eyes until we saw the last handkerchief wave in the distance. That night we entrained and arrived at Suez the following morning. The *Port Lincoln* was there in waiting for us,

and at 3 o'clock p. m. we went on board. We had men picked from the first, second and third battalions; all a fine, jolly lot of fellows.

Suez is a small town on the west bank of the Canal, at its opening from the Gulf. Its population is probably about 15,000.

It may be of interest to say a few words on the Suez Canal before we leave it for other fields. It is 100 kilometres, roughly about 90 miles, long. Its breadth is about 300 feet at its widest, and its depth about 60 to 70 feet. Far away in the ages, the idea already existed among the ancients of connecting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean by means of a canal, the great obstacle in the way being the great desert which filled the work with sand as fast as the workmen excavated. It was the renowned French engineer Lepere who proposed to Napoleon Bonaparte the plan of a canal, provided with locks. After him, another Frenchman, Ferdinand de Lesseps, brought the great work to its issue. In 1852 de Lesseps obtained from the Khedive Said the necessary concession to start the work, but England, the devout lover of progress, blocked the way. In 1859, in spite of all opposition, the work was begun and in ten years, that is, on November the 19th, 1869, the first ships sailed through the Canal. The total cost of the work is said to have been nearly £5,000,000 (\$25,000,000). The largest vessels going and coming from Australia now traverse the Suez Canal. There is very little scenery along the way, but at night when brightened by the strong electric light from passing ships there is a cer-



tain charm given to the lonely desert, as I heard it once described, "unearthly loveliness." The journey lasts about 18 hours, costing a toll of about \$2.40 per head for passengers. The waters around Suez swarm with sharks.

We sailed from Suez at sunset, the effect of which gave an unusually beautiful emerald hue to the waters of the great gulf. The sunset is short and sudden, so we quickly lost sight of Suez and the canal, and *Port Lincoln* headed for the famous Red Sea. The waters are not really Red, as school boys oft imagine, but I can assure them that it is literally red hot for the four or five days that the ship takes to sail through that historic Sea. It is not unusual to have several deaths from exhaustion in that journey, and it is always dangerous for any one who suffers from heart trouble. It was over that sea, as we all know, that Moses raised his rod, dividing the waters, that the Children of Israel might find a passage of flight from the Egyptians and their haughty Pharaoh. But as soon as the Egyptians with Pharaoh had entered on that wondrous path in pursuit, Moses again made a sign which closed in the waters and engulfed the whole Egyptian army with horses and chariots. Some one suggested that perhaps another Moses has now arisen who will spread another rod over the Irish Sea, and free the children of Erin from another tyrant mad with pride and plunder.

After 12 days' sail we came within sight of East Africa. Nearer and nearer we came till we had a distinct view of the shore. Oh! what a relief to see trees

and fresh, green vegetation once more, after all the dreary months in the Egyptian desert where the eye was never relieved by even one blade of grass. Our Soldier Boys were delighted as we sailed slowly up the narrow channel that leads into Kilindini harbor in Mombasa, when they saw again the palm trees waving, the rich, green and yellow oranges, mangoes and bananas. It reminded them of their far away homes in the West. A beam of joy shone on every face as the bright scenery on both banks of the river made them feel as if they were again in the dear homeland of perpetual sunshine. The harbor was filled with hospital ships and as we drew nearer and saw the hundreds of sick and wounded and dying, being lifted from the small boats, a great silence fell on all of us. *The feeling that we were right in it.* The entrancing scenes around us, contrasted with the grim procession of boats bearing their freights of wrecked humanity, made us realize "all is not gold that glitters."

The landing officer came on board shortly after we cast anchor, and then the usual "red tape." All had to pass in review, to answer the questionnaire, age, nationality, religion, next of kin and *que sais-je?* The following morning at 7 o'clock we left the *Port Lincoln* and landed at Kilindini.

Mombasa is about two miles from the harbor, and a trolley line, on which each one runs his own private trolley, pushed by natives, leads to the town. Mombasa was once a mere Arab village, but of late years, and especially during the war, it grew into a fine town. On the way the Holy Ghost Fathers have a flourishing

mission, and a fine solidly built residence in concrete. The residence is large and imposing. It is the *pied-à-terre*—the halting station for all missionaries journeying from the coast to the interior. A railway line runs from Mombasa to the beautiful modern city of Nairobi, B. E. A., a distance of 500 miles, the journey taking 24 hours.

With what longing I hurried to the mission can easily be imagined, to meet again dear confreres of long ago, and meet again the amiable Bishop Neville, one time my professor in Blackrock College, Dublin, and later my Superior in the West Indies. There, too, was Father Lutz, Superior of the mission, whom I had known in the Scholasticate 30 golden years before. *Ecce quam bonum et jucundum*. My joy in meeting his lordship and my confreres was indeed very great. All religions know what such means, but we whose motto is *Cor unum et anima una* may perhaps appreciate it more; more still, for the seniors amongst us when there was but one house of formation for all nationalities, as Milton puts it in his Lycidas.

The flourishing condition of the Mombasa Mission owes much to the good and faithful sons of St. Francis Xavier, who are there in great numbers from Goa, in India. As the Irish love St. Patrick and ever cling to his Catholic teachings, so the Goans fondly cherish the memory of their great apostle and are Catholics *avant tout*. One Goan gentleman, Mr. de Sousa, who occupies an honorable and lucrative government position, practically gives his all to the propagation of Catholic work. Besides many other good works, he

built out of his own income a recreation hall and library for Catholic soldiers, but not for Catholics exclusively; he was too broad-minded and generous for that. All were welcomed within that hall, where the topic of religion was never discussed. Mr. de Sousa not only built the hall, but supplied the books, which were quite up to date. May the good God be Himself his reward for all his generosity.

I lunched at the Mission, and spent with the community a pleasant few hours. His Lordship and Father Lutz drove back with me to Kilindini, the automobile provided by Mr. de Sousa. Orders had been issued to entrain at 5 o'clock p. m. Shortly before we started, the Boys surrounded me, almost wailing, "We haven't got a cigarette, no one has been allowed to the town." I knew well what this meant for the Boys, but what could I do? I was under the same orders. Turning round, I saw Mr. de Sousa beside me. "What's the matter?" he asked. "They have no cigarettes for the journey," I said. In an instant he jumped into an auto, and drove to Mombasa, returning just as we were entering the train, bearing two immense parcels of packets of cigarettes. I hear again the echo of the great cheer that went up at the sight of Mr. de Sousa—and the cigarettes—*more or less*.

Now, indeed, our real troubles began, about which anon.

## CHAPTER XI.

### EAST AFRICAN CAMPAIGN

**T**HERE was a sweltering heat in the afternoon on which we entrained at Mombasa. The men were packed like sardines in a box. We did not know our destination, but we believed it was Tanga, which had just been taken, not by the army but by the navy commanded by Admiral Charleton (not sure of the name). The army, made up almost exclusively of South African forces, suffered great defeat, and all the ammunition captured there by the Germans enabled them to play fox and geese with the British forces. Another great assistance to the Germans was a German ship flying a Norwegian flag which, in the face of all Britannia's sea-ruling power got in at a port south of Dares Salam, went up the river, unloaded her immense supplies of ammunition, foodstuffs, garden seeds, uniforms, etc., and was then blown up at Kisi. I heard from an English officer that the commander of that German ship who was taken for a Norwegian, dined on board a British warship at the Seychelles Islands! There were many mistakes and blunders, but these will occur in the best regulated families. Perhaps one explanation, if the story was true, may be that the general commanding the German forces had been a N. C. O. on the staff with General Smuts during the Boer war, before the latter turned his coat and became an Englishman.

East Africa at the time of our arrival there was governed by South Africans. They ran everything and everyone. Even their own men they ran to death. The English proper had not even a look in, so they sat on the wall and looked on, aye, even chuckled from time to time. All the staff officers were English, and happily preserved their good manners, despite their contagion with the Boer command. We were so far under command of our own officers. The commandant, a captain in rank, was a comparatively young man, about thirty-six years of age. He did not appear to have much character and very little consideration for the men. For instance, he obliged them to march at an average of 25 miles a day, carrying their heavy packs till a Boer general one day shouted at him, "Why, you are killing your men; take off those packs and have them carried by the transports." It is amusing to see how a subordinate in the army trembles in the presence of a superior officer. Our commandant, however, was mostly gentlemanly in his relations with his brother officers, and though some held a contrary opinion, he was considerate and friendly to me. Our adjutant, who afterward met his death—how, is not our business; we "were in active service," the universal answer to every query—was one of the nicest officers in the regiment, though he was not popular. I held him in the highest esteem, and I was always grateful to him, for on every occasion doing his part to facilitate my ministrations to the men. I never wanted anything more. I was exceedingly sorry when I heard of his death. We had one who did give trouble,



simply because he had, to all appearance at least, no military training. He would have been better suited in a pawn shop, folding second hand clothes or doing crochet work in a millinery. He had a peculiar weakness for sugar and sweets generally, and he smacked his lips when he saw plum pudding or a sweet cake of any kind. He once offered eggs and flour and sugar to some interned German ladies, requesting them to make him some sponge cake. He disliked Catholics, principally because, as he once told me, "a near relative of his had lately disgraced the family by joining the Romish church." I was his *bete noir*, and the popish Mass at which the Boys sang some Catholic hymns, blunted all his musical proclivities. To get me out of the way was his only road to peace and a red tag on his uniform. So one morning, to my surprise, he came to my dugout and as if endowed specially by intuitive knowledge for the onslaught, said, "Padre, you have fever and you must go back to the hospital." Now the hospital was 96 miles behind us. "Why," I said, "I have no fever. I have 'jiggers'\* in my feet, but everyone in the contingent is suffering from 'jiggers.'" He went out and returned with our O. C., who assured me that the hospital at Handeni was the best place; he had arranged with a broken-down transport to take me, when it was repaired, etc., etc. "Sir," I said, "you are not the regimental M. O.,

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\*A "jigger" is a small insect that cannot be seen with the naked eye. It enters the flesh, weaves a small bag about the size of a pigeon pea, within which it deposits about 1,000 eggs. If not removed before the bag breaks, it may be serious and often results in the loss of a limb. The natives remove jiggers easily.

who alone can send me to a hospital. When the M. O. says that I must go to a hospital, sick or well, I shall at once obey. My place is with my flock, and with them I shall remain until I fall."

A doctor was called from another camp. We had no M. O., and when he took my temperature, which was normal and looked at me, he began to laugh. "These fellows evidently," he said, "want to get rid of you. You just stay where you are, and as you have experience of malaria, use your own remedies." Here ended that attempt, but what they tried later on we shall see. Apart from this one exception, the other officers who accompanied us were as fine fellows as I shall ever again care to meet. There was one beardless baby, but that was not his fault. I heard he grew wings later and began to fly.

Our train journey lasted three days through a most beautiful country in nature's wild garb. We journeyed from Mombasa to Voi, and there branched off into German East Africa. On the second morning of our journey we were stopped at Bura and everyone was delighted to get out, breathe fresh air and stretch his legs. A great battle must have been fought there. We saw so many graves of dead soldiers. The graves were well kept and the name over every grave.

At Bura, for the first time, we saw elephants, about 80 or 100, in their wild state. At a distance of perhaps 2,000 yards they crossed the railway line and went quietly along to their mountain fastnesses. Away in the distance on a hilltop I saw our once great mission of Bura. "What building is that," I asked a sentry, pointing to the place. "That, sir, was one of those

Roman Catholic missions. 'They wus all Germans, sir, they wus, but they're all gone now.' Yes, they are; the priest in charge a prisoner in India and the three nuns of the Order of Precious Blood dead. The mission itself was ransacked and looted by British soldiers, and the three Sisters dead, the result of cruelties inflicted on them. This, alas! was the sad fate of many of our Catholic missions that were founded and built by ancient missionaries, long before any other white man had set his foot in darkest Africa. They were the fruit of many tears and labors and sacrifices of those valiant priests who left home and friends and all, to spread the light of faith where all had been darkness, their bones long since gone to dust in the places where they fell. Now those sacred places were desecrated, the sacred vestments given to Mussulmans and converted by them into common attire, while chalices and other consecrated vessels were used by the British soldiers as drinking cups.

In a British trench, captured by colored soldiers who were Christians, but fighting for the Germans, a monstrance stolen from a mission was found and returned to the mission of Mrogoro. The most shocking use was made of vestments, as I was informed by Catholic soldiers, and all this with the knowledge of the commanding officers, all South Africans. As for the ill-treatment meted out to unoffending missionaries, simply because they were considered Germans, they themselves will one day tell their sad story. I met one priest who had been tied in a chair for two days, and his church at Mgate burned. At the mission of Mhunda, where the missionaries placed

their church, their house and food at the disposal of General Smuts' troops, their kindness and generosity was so great, though they were Germans, that the troops when moving on left a note expressing their thanks and the following:

"Mhunda Mission, 2/9/16.

*"To Whom It May Concern:*

"This is to testify that I have left with the Rev. Father Ritter 400 ewes, lambs and goats; also 16 cows and some calves. This stock was not in a condition to move, the ewes being heavy with lamb and the cows in bad condition. The Rev. Fr. Ritter is *authorized by me* to slaughter what stock is necessary to feed the nine white ladies, three children, himself and his brother padres. He is authorized to milk the cows and divide the milk among the white people under his care. He will also care for any maimed horses left at the mission.

"W. D. HARRIS,

"O. C. Mhunda."

What a kindness to leave the mission what belonged to it, not only to the members of the particular community, but to me, a British subject (save the mark!) and every member of our order. I ought to mention that the white ladies and others referred to were refugees who sought sanctuary at the mission while the bombardment was going on. But this was not all. W. D. Harris, O. C., and his men moved on after having made this wonderful concession to the Catholic mission!

Then came on the real British lion, the O. C. D. section, L. of C., under whose brutal control our regi-

ment fell. He started by putting a post of 25 of our men at the mission, four sentries with fixed bayonets, two at the mission and two at the convent. The Fathers and Sisters were not allowed to move around further than 50 yards without a written permit. When this human monster came to the mission breathing fire, and saw the cattle which had been left by his predecessor, he ordered every cow, sheep, lamb and goat to be instantly handed over for the use of the military. Yet king's regulation, as given in the Field Book on Active Service, warns that all private property be respected, especially property of charitable institutions. Anyone found looting, robbing, injuring, and a string of other words, were to suffer death. The O. C. D. Sec. L. of C. was the Kaiser of E. A., but we shall have plenty of this notorious O. C. later on, when speaking of religious service.

I shall have to go back to our train journey. We were at Bura, and the battle of Taveta was raging. Taveta is in the midst of a vast plain. There is a hill perhaps 200 feet high, surrounded and covered with bush and jungle. Right on the top of this hill there was a deep dugout, and through a hole appeared the muzzle of a large gun. Around the center of the hill was a trench, while another trench concealed by bush and bramble was at the base of the hill. The British came rushing on and began to open fire on the hill. All their heavy guns were turned on the dugout on the top, and the trench around the center, where there wasn't a single German. The Germans fired on the British from the trench hidden at the bottom of the hill. The British were falling in

hundreds, while their balls rebounded off the immense, impregnable rock on the top of the hill. When I reached the ground it was covered with the wounded, dying or dead British. When the Germans had exhausted all their ammunition, they slipped around the trench and escaped at the back of the hill and had gone for two days before the fact was discovered by the South Africans. When the British stormed the trench they found seven dead Germans. Fritz had flown. We all visited the hill at Taveta when the Germans had gone, and saw the dummy dugout and gun which attracted the sharp, exact eye of the Boer soldiers. They could have kicked themselves. At last we reached the end of our train journey and arrived at Korogwee, whence the Germans had just been routed. We were all tired and worn and hungry, being on iron rations. We found a Y. M. C. A. hut in the camp, and the poor, weary Boys rushed there to purchase a cup of tea. To their surprise they were ordered out, as no colored troops, even in the King's uniform, and fighting to save England, were allowed to enter, much less be served with anything. The Y. M. C. A. would have no customers whose blood was not blue, and perhaps they thought the South Africans had a touch of aristocracy. I knew how badly our men needed something to eat, so I humbled myself and pleaded with these paragons. They softened, but the conditions were that the colored men must enter by a back door and bring their own mess tins; they might bite the cups or leave the print of their lips on them. I was not surprised at the account which the Americans brought back from France of the Y. M. C. A.



## CHAPTER XII

### EAST AFRICA CONTINUED

**T**HE afternoon following our arrival at Korogwee we received new marching orders. The G. O. C. of the camp was a short, well-groomed man and very pompous. There was something wanting in him which one could not help noticing at once. I heard he had been a "ranker," promoted from the ranks, and he did not seem to fit his uniform, or the uniform did not seem to fit him, whichever is the greater compliment. His orders were that we must get out; most of us knew why. Our destination was Handeni, 75 miles farther on, all the way to be done on foot. We left Korogwee about 4 o'clock on a Saturday evening and marched some seven miles, the first stage of our journey. That night we camped in a large field. The whistle blew next morning at 4 o'clock, and at 4:30 I said mass under a hedge. A good number of the Boys were present and the Catholics engaged as orderlies and sentries were able to follow the mass at a distance. Immediately after mass our good and very kind cook, whose name was Mulligan, gave me a mess-tin of black coffee and a biscuit. I always remember this boy with gratitude. He was not a Catholic, but we were all united; the question of religion was never brought up. I asked leave to start before the battalion to avoid the dust, so I left unescorted *en route*. After I had walked some three

miles a motor truck passed and stopped some 50 yards ahead. The sergeant, who sat in front with the chauffeur, a corporal, invited me to "a lift," which I gratefully accepted. At the back of the car sat two East Indian soldiers, on coils of wire, and I sat opposite them on another coil. These men were out for the purpose of examining and repairing the telegraph wires. Having driven a few miles, the sergeant stopped the car and got out to light a cigarette and the corporal kindly invited me to a place in front. "Plenty of room here, sir, if you like." I did like, and very fortunately. Looking on to where there was a sharp turn in the road, I saw what I believed to be a bush. "Does the road end there," I asked, "where that kind of bush is growing?" "No, sir," was the answer, "this road goes on for 175 miles to Mrogoro, and that's no bush. Why, it's a lion." A lion! How shall we pass, I thought. I tried to keep my courage up and pretended not to be frightened.

The sergeant cranked the car and we drove on. As we approached the lion walked quietly off the road into the jungle. There when we came up we saw him standing in all his wild majesty, and near him a lioness with two cubs. The car was going at about five miles an hour, as the sand on the road was deep. We had gone some 150 yards when we were startled by a cry from behind, and before we could stop or realize what had happened the lion had one of the Indians in his mouth, making off with him into the jungle. We still heard a cry in the distance, and then, no more!

This was my first encounter with a lion in East Africa, and I leave the reader to imagine how I felt, or rather how I would have felt had I not *liked* to change from back to front of the car. I did hear my heart beating, though the sergeant and the corporal pretended that they did not mind. The poor Indian left at the back shook all over, put his joined hands to his forehead and prayed "Allah! Allah! Allah" (Arabic for God.)

The distance from our first night's sleeping ground to our camp on the second was supposed to be 20 miles, but I think they were Irish miles. The place was called Zendeni. My friends dropped me in the middle of a magnificent rubber plantation which ran along the road at either side for miles. They had finished their day's journey. There stood a small dwelling house that might have belonged to a superintendent, for round about were the ruins of what appeared to have been a rubber factory, as the Germans destroyed everything in their retreat. Remember, there were 150,000 British pursuing 10,000 Germans. Large pieces of what appeared to have been machinery were strewn about fine potato, cabbage and other vegetable gardens.

I had enough of traveling alone in that country infested with every kind of wild animal, so I sat down in the ruined house and awaited the battalion. Soon there came along 1,000 native carriers, under the care of the Anglican Bishop of Zanzibar. His lordship is a high churchman, very high, as they say. It was he who excommunicated the Protestant Bishops of Mom-

basa and Nairobi, just before the war broke out, for *participatio in sacris* with heretics. If I remember well, this good and learned Bishop accused his brothers of giving holy communion to low church members, an appeal, which is still pending, having been made to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was this case that made Kikuyuland so well known. The Bishop wore the rank of major and, like a true missionary, made all the journey on foot. Most of the carriers were Christians and wore a crucifix suspended to a string from the neck. They wore nothing else until the Bishop reached the resting place, and they then tied a piece of linen stuff around their waist.

I was reading my breviary when these carriers came up and they at once recognized me as a priest. They all fell upon their knees and began to pray with a fervor that edified me and would put our men to shame. Many of them were Catholics. Their profound reverence for me showed the excellent training they received from the good Bishop. Nearby was a deep well in concrete, but the water was said to be poisoned. Yet natives were drawing it, but it may have been for washing. I was thirsty and drank some, yet I was not poisoned! The Bishop kindly informed me that Zendeni was seven miles farther on. Good gracious! Seven miles still to march! I waited for our advance guard and then proceeded. Those seven miles seemed seven leagues. Every one I met I asked, "*Wapi madi?*" (Where is water?) We reached Zendeni about 5 o'clock P. M.—and the water? It was as black as tea and filled with insects. The men boiled it,

let it cool; we closed our eyes and drank it! I fortunately had some Bovril in my haversack. We made beef tea which was not so bad. No transports arrived, so we slept the sleep of the just à la belle étoile.

Next morning, after having celebrated Holy Mass, I started again, but this time and ever after, with an escort. I always had the same faithful escort, my orderly, Leo, Sergeant Joseph and Corporal Dumas.

Our next halting place was called "Mission," 20 miles farther on. We had no rations with us. We sat down on the way to rest; the Boys slept. I was reading my breviary, when a mechanical transport drew up to ask some questions. The men got down for a smoke and one of them came to me and said, "Pardon me, sir, are you a priest?" in beautiful Irish brogue. It was eating and drinking to hear it, there in the depths of an African wilderness. "Yes," I said, "from what part of Ireland do you come?" "From Mayo, Father," was the answer. We had all the rations we wanted. The sergeant was a New Zealander and a Catholic. Preserved sausage, tea, sugar, condensed milk, biscuit, plenty of cigarettes. We got busy, made a fire, heated our machonoki rations and sausage in our mess tins, and we wouldn't call the queen our aunt. While I cooked and stirred the pots, the Boys had a bath and washed their uniforms, which needed it badly.

The battalion reached us late in the evening, and all were surprised how little we could eat of the rice and bully beef, the army rations, but we kept *mum*. It was real missionary life, and it was during those days that I realized the fascination that Africa had for all our

priests. 'To sit in those lonely wastes in the wild, wild wilderness, away from the hum and bustle of civilization, and commune alone with God; to feel and know that the great God was there protecting us, hearing our prayers however imperfect, and filling our souls with His divine presence. Then, to think of it, Holy Mass offered away out there, under the rubber trees or under a hedge, the Boys kneeling around singing that hymn that I hear so often since in midnight dreams:


“Soul of my Saviour, sanctify my breast,  
Body of Christ, be Thou my saving Guest,  
Blood of my Saviour, bathe me in thy tide,  
Wash me, ye waters, gushing from His side.”

The while through the vast forest resounding the roar of a distant lion, or the weird cackle of the monkeys hanging from the trees around. Oh! the depth of the riches of the wisdom of God. The war in many of its phases has brought heaven nearer to us, and with ever deeper and more fervent longing do I look forward to the happy day when we shall all kneel around the feet of our Almighty Father in that home of bliss and peace, when the hymns we sang in the lonely jungle will be changed into the angels' hymn of “wisdom and glory and power and might unto the Lamb that was slain.”



## CHAPTER XIII

### EAST AFRICA CONTINUED

 HERE was still a long way to go before we reached Handeni (35 miles), and the O. C. decided on an early morning start to avoid the heat of the day, when the men could rest. In kind consideration for me, he insisted on my not doing that march, as the battalion would leave at 1 o'clock A. M. I must go by transport, and though my constant wish was never to have any privilege which the other officers and men could not enjoy, yet my duty was to obey. The "nambypamby" officer, so fond of spongecake, always traveled by transport, probably for the sake of good example to his company.

I went down from the rubber plantation where the battalion was to pass the night, to the main road to inquire about a transport. There was a disabled car by the roadside with two soldiers who proved to be Australians. I asked if there was any likelihood of a transport passing that evening. They answered, "No; but tomorrow morning about 9 o'clock several will pass on their way to the firing line." With all that grand spirit, so characteristic of Australians, they said: "If, sir, you wish to sleep here with us you are welcome, and you can get the first transport that passes in the morning." I thanked them and accepted, the more gladly when I recognized the Australian accent. "You are Australians," I said. "Where did you come

from?" One came from Redfern, Sydney, N. S. W., and the other from Warnambool, Victoria. "Redfern is a nice place," I said. "Did you know Father O'Regan, the Catholic priest here?" "Rather; do you know him, sir?" "I used to know him long ago, but that was before you were born, when they ran the old steam trams in Sydney." "Were you in Sydney?" "Yes," I said. "What do you think of our beautiful harbor?" "Of your harbor and of your city I can never think anything but what is beautiful. Sydney was my first love as a priest, and nowhere else has ever had the same charm for me. I think of every spot, from the rocks around St. Patrick's along by George street, old St. Benedict's, Hyde Park, the Domain, Botanical Gardens, Lady Macquerrie's Chair, all those beautiful bays of the harbor, all crowned by St. Mary's Cathedral." "Put it there," said the man from Redfern, giving me the true clasp of an Australian hand.

"Were you ever in Warnamshool?" asked the other. "Once," I said. "I preached my first mission there 28 years ago."

They could stand it no longer; it was Australia back again. Being wrecked and awaiting repairs, they had a goodly store of supplies, and, needless to say, in real Australian fashion they set me down to a hearty supper which I thoroughly enjoyed. A canvas hood hung over the car and a sleeping place was prepared for me, which meant placing a blanket on the boards of the car. We laid down one beside the other, talking of Australia, the Melbourne cup, Canterbury races, Manly Beach, the Hawkesbury River, the Blue Moun-

tains, till I could hear no more and went to sleep dreaming of the Jenolan Caves, Govet's Leap and other Australian scenes of loveliness.

In the midst of a beautiful dream of a picnic to the National Park, I awoke, half suffocated with the odor of petrol. I turned to the man beside me and asked if I might raise the canvas to get a little air. "Not so loud, sir," he answered. "Don't you hear the lion just outside?" I heard the heavy tread and the deep sniffing and was at once convinced by a terrific roar of the disappointed monster, smelling perhaps my Irish blood, like his namesake across the Channel, but he had not intelligence enough to know that I was lying at the other side of the canvas. Another narrow shave! I thought, as I heard his majesty bounding away. I had no more sleep that night.

We rose with the sun at 6 A. M. and had a delightful wash, for there was a plentiful supply there of excellent water. My Sydney friend took my sole remaining shirt and washed it in the brook—please ask no questions—and dried it in the sun. Oh! the pleasure of a clean, dry shirt in active service, after five or six weeks of wear. Returned soldiers, and they only, can understand what this means. "Advance Australia," I said, "Kangaroo and Emu, too." We had a tempting breakfast of fried eggs, purchased from some native, with sausage, and a cup of tea, almost as sweet as I ever drank in Redfern. A post-office transport came up and took me on. "Remember us, sir," said my Sydney friend, as we said goodbye. Aye, my poor comrades, remember you, that I will,

and may I sometime be able to say to myself that you also remember me? I wonder now may they be still living to learn that I still am mindful of their kindness and of them.

The road was long and rugged, riding those 35 miles, but the longest road will have an end, so this one. We arrived at Handeni about 3 o'clock P. M. I saw a Y. M. C. A. hut and I went there to purchase something to eat. Those in charge were enjoying their afternoon tea. I stood for some time in patient waiting when one stood up and came to me. "What is it, captain?" The shelves were well supplied and I looked around for the most convenient thing to purchase for eating purposes. I saw some glass pots of preserved cheese and some boxes of Marie biscuits. "Please," I said, "sell me two pots of that cheese and a tin of biscuits." "Sorry, sir, but it's after hours." He turned on his heel and went inside, drawing the curtain of his private tent. So that is the Christianity, I thought, of which these men make profession, and yet Catholics there be who are not ashamed to be of them. No use complaining in active service; these things can't be helped.

The camp commandant was an Irishman named Cashel, who, in spite of his mixing with Boers, did not lose his Irish hospitality. He invited me to mess. The mess was indeed simple and scanty, but what the good commandant had he gave most generously, and I was thankful.

At nightfall our men arrived, footsore and weary. I shall never forget the broken appearance of them

as they threw off their packs and fell almost helpless on the ground. I was shocked to hear a young *blanc bec* of an officer so far forget himself as to say, "Those lazy hounds want some lead poured into them," men who had been marching with heavy packs from 1 A. M. to 6 P. M. Some of the men heard the expression and there would have been trouble had I not interfered and calmed them.

The following morning before mass I had the happiness of receiving four converts into the Church and reconciling a fallen-away Catholic.

We remained two days in Hendeni, and our next march was to Refilling Station, about 18 miles farther. We knew that the Germans were not far off, as we heard the firing distinctly. We slept in an open field. I slept in a sitting posture, my back to a tree, for by this time my sides were stripped from sleeping on the hard ground. We had no rations, but we had grown accustomed to pass whole days without food.

The transport arrived in the morning about 4 o'clock. An ox that had strayed from some transport, we killed, and so a meal was provided. At 1 o'clock P. M. the same day we were again on the march for Kangata. There the men had the entire day to rest. Many of them had fever and more of them had sore and bleeding feet. It was heart-rending to see them trying to walk, pushed by the officers. Though I felt tired, fortunately my feet did not trouble me.

Our next march was to Makindu, with a rest half way, at Licagura, the distance being sixty miles. A terrible battle, though one-sided, was raging at Makindu.

The Germans shelled the British for 15 consecutive days and nights, while not a shot was fired from our side. The South Africans were commanded by General Smuts, who was, I heard, a good lawyer, though not necessarily a good soldier. He was C.-in-C., aided by Generals Britz and Shepherd. The plan was to surround the Germans, wherever they were. Accordingly, General Smuts, with some 40,000 men, took the right wing over the mountains and I think it was General Shepherd who took the left wing, Britz holding the center. General Smuts kept to the mountains on the right for a distance of 25 miles, till he reached the Catholic Mission of Mhonda, which looked down on Touriani. At Touriani there was a post of 12 Germans and a few natives. A spy in the pay of the British gave word to these Germans that their men back at Makindu were being surrounded. The men at Touriani at once telegraphed to Makindu and all rushed from there and took up their positions in the plain below the mission, which the British now occupied. The battle began, the British firing from the mission, a spot well known to the Germans. The latter clearly saw the British from where they were hidden in the rubber plantation, but the South Africans could not discern the Germans. Unwilling to destroy the mission, the Germans invited them to leave the mission and the church and fight them on the opposite hill. Nothing doing.

The Germans, who were about 10,000, crossed the bridge over a large river in the plain, with their guns and belongings, and then burned down the bridge,



while at least 60,000 British looked down from the mountain on the burning bridge and never fired a shot. I think it was here that General Britz and his men were captured, but the Germans let them go again, as worthless, so it was alleged. It is certain that General Britz was captured at least once and probably twice, after which he took a holiday somewhere.

Before leaving Touriani, I shall relate a story that was told me by a soldier, as having occurred there after the Germans were believed to have moved on to the Waami River. Every day British officers were sniped, while the whereabouts of Fritz could not be located. Every tree was searched, every nook and corner, but in vain, till at last a South African, who rejoiced in the name of Murphy, lying flat on the ground at an outpost and looking over a field of pineapples, thought he saw one of them stirring. He whispered to his companions, "Say, one of them turnips is stirring." Right enough; it was Fritz with a pineapple stuck on the spike of his helmet. Fritz heard the whisper and fled, leaving his pineapple helmet and a good supply of cigarettes in his dugout and a notebook with the number of officers sniped. The reader may take the story for what it is worth. I give it as I heard it, *si non e vero, ben trovato*.

## CHAPTER XIV

### RELIGION TOO MUCH IN THE WAY



AS THE country got cleared of the Germans, who retreated to the Waami River, 25 miles farther, we came on to Touriani, our men being employed in L. of C. (lines of communication). We were now in the most unhealthy belt of East Africa, and the men were falling victims in great numbers to dysentery and black-water fever. It was deplorable to see these poor, helpless sufferers, without any kind of convenience, unable to move, weakened out with dysentery, their uniforms in a filthy condition. The reader can imagine the rest. There were no medical comforts, not even a tin of condensed milk.

By this time we had as M. O. a German, though it was not known. He was a most humane man, and I one day saw tears falling from his eyes at his helplessness to in any way alleviate the suffering of the men. I was in a bad condition myself from "jiggers." My feet were inflamed and I could not walk. The I. G. C. (inspector general of communications), with the O. C. L. of C., visited our camp and passed the night with us. I thought it was a good opportunity to ask leave to spend some time at the Catholic Mission, which, being conducted by Priests of our Congregation was really my home, and have my jiggered feet attended to by the good Sisters. I accordingly wrote a

note to our adjutant, requesting the permission. It was Sunday morning and I was on my way to the Mission Church, when I met our own O. C. "That's all right, Padre," said the O. C., "you have the permission; moreover, a post of our regiment is going up there."

The mission was a good mile up the mountain, and, helped by my orderly and a good stick, I succeeded in reaching the Church. It was a fine building, damaged somewhat by the bombardment, but the solid walls remained intact.

Before the war there were 6,000 Christians in this mission, which was dedicated to the Sacred Heart, but now only a few hundred attended mass, through fear of the military. So many females had been outraged and killed by South African soldiers that no woman or girl was to be seen. They betook themselves to the mountains. The horrible outrages committed by the military—not the Germans—I could not describe. The only case I saw for myself was a native mother with baby in arms, and her little daughter of some ten or twelve years, who had been outraged by an officer and his orderly, and died at the mission while I was there. On the matter being reported, the officer fled, and I never heard whether any action was taken afterwards. There were many such outrages charged to British troops, even against two men of our regiment. A political officer was appointed, to inquire into all cases of complaint, between military and natives, but what could a poor native do, speaking only his own language? True, the political officer was an Anglican minister and spoke Swahili fluently, but the natives, confused and terrified,

often contradicted themselves and often failed to identify the accused. Hence the charges could not hold water, and so terrible things occurred. *Aquila non capit muscas.*

Every Catholic in the camp was present at mass on that Sunday, but most of the men were on outpost duty. Besides the men of our regiment, many soldiers from other regiments attended, too. It was High Mass, at which the native Christians sang the Gregorian chant in a manner that would do credit to any church in Europe or the U. S. A. There were two sermons, one in Swahili for the natives, of whom about 500 were present, and a sermon in English, which I preached for the benefit of the soldiers. The natives were so delighted to see Catholic soldiers they hurried to their gardens after mass, bringing presents of chakula (food), sugar cane, eggs, vegetables, bananas. The men offered them money, but the natives shook their heads. "Apana ahsanta" ("No, thank you.") As the men lined up to return to camp, the natives sang, "Tippereri mhali; sana, sana" ("It's a Long Way to Tipperary") and "Munga atunga Mfalme" ("God Save the King").

My tent was sent up from Touriani and I remained at the mission with the guards. My feet were indeed in a bad condition, for in spite of all Sister Majella's care, the good Sister Infirmarian, I could not keep the jiggers out. They got under my toe nails and laid their eggs there. Each one with the tiny bag of eggs has to be taken out with a needle, a suffering that is far from pleasant. The M. O. had to lance one of my

feet, as it threatened blood poison. One blessing is that these jiggers come and disappear with a certain season, generally August and September, so I got on my feet again.

On the Friday following our first Sunday in Touriani I sent notice, as usual, to the adjutant that mass would be celebrated at 9 o'clock on Sunday in Sacred Heart Church, Mhouda, requesting that it be put in orders. Late that same evening I got the following notice from the adjutant:

“Touriani, 15/9/1916.

*“To Rev. Father B., R. C. Chaplain:*

“From orders just received from Colonel C., O. C., D Section, the following is an extract:

“‘All missions (there was one only, the next was 75 miles away) in the vicinity of posts are out of bounds, except troops required to be posted for purpose of protection.’

“Under orders, I regret to say that I am unable to permit anybody from [sic] going to the mission, so cannot publish your note in battalion orders.

(Signed) “—————, Lt. and Adjt.”

Immediately I wired to this O. C., D Section:

“Mission of the S. Heart, Mhouda, 15/9/16.

“I have just now received notice that the mission in Mhouda is out of bounds for troops and therefore the Catholic men of the ——— Regiment cannot come to Divine Service in the Mission Church next Sunday, 17/9/16. As there is no reason given for the order I

cannot but say that it is a very extraordinary one, especially as the men are marched to and from the Church.

"May I ask you to be good enough to indicate a becoming place in Touriani camp where I may celebrate mass for the Catholic men of the —— Regiment on Sundays? Let me have an early reply, as I shall have to inform the Principal Chaplain in Nairobi if the men are deprived of their right to assist at Divine Service on Sundays, please.

(Signed) "B., Catholic Chaplain."

There was no answer, and consequently no Church service for Catholics on Sunday, 17/9/16. Later in the day, I learned that the political officer, an Anglican minister, entered the camp to hold service. The Catholic Boys and most of the non-Catholics refused to be present at a Protestant service. As a punishment, they were sent at once, on that Sunday morning, 130 miles behind the enemy, to dig trenches and fill sand bags. I learned this from a soldier, an East Indian, in another regiment. The following day I wrote:

"The Mission, Mhouda, 18/9/16.

"The Adjutant, etc.:

"I have been informed that the Catholic men of the —— Regiment were compelled to work yesterday, Sunday.

"(1) Is this information correct?

"(2) What was the necessity of working on Sunday and against King's Regulations?

"(3) How is it that men were allowed to come to



the mission on yesterday afternoon and were not allowed to come to mass in the morning, please?"

I received the following letter :

"(1) Yes; except that men only worked from 9 A. M. to 11 A. M.

"(2) The O. C. D. Section is inspecting defenses on Wednesday (this was not so; he never inspected anything, except to browbeat and storm and swear; his next appearance was not until 28/9/16) and work had to be pushed through. In case you did not know, it is always the custom, in active service, to make no distinction as regards work, except that if church service can be arranged it is done so. . . .

"(3) If several men were up at the mission, including the tale-tellers, it was your duty to send in their names for disobedience of *orders*. You will merely be upholding military discipline by doing so.

"The C. O. wishes to inform you that he does not require instructions as to how orders given to him should be carried out.

(Signed) "————— etc."

I knew unofficially that, though the adjutant wrote this, he was so directed to do, not by our O. C., whom, had he been independent, I would have seen directly. There was a "Polonius" behind the arras, and that was the molly-coddler who was so fond of spongecake and who was now pitchforked up into being post commandant. I made up my mind to go down to the camp, badly as I could walk, to see our O. C. and adjutant, for, though I would not mind whether he was pleased

or displeased when there was a question of duty, yet I respected him too highly to write or say anything that he could take personal offense at. On my way down I met the adjutant—he is now dead, *nil de mortuis nisi bona*. He was on his way to see me on the same errand as was taking me down—to assure me that the correspondence that had passed and was likely to continue was official and not coming from Captain ———, O. C., nor from himself. I was glad to be able to give him the same assurance on my part and I added: “I know who is behind all this bigotry.” “You do,” he said, “then all’s square.” “Who,” I asked, “is this O. C. D. Section, into whose iron hand we have fallen? Is he an Englishman?” “Yes, an Englishman.” (The adjutant wasn’t.) I did not believe it. I never believed it. Honor to whom honor is due. I never met an English officer who was not a gentleman. This O. C., D. Section, *was not*. He might have been a cattle driver in his early days, now a slavedriver, when and where he dared. He was a tall, well-built man, quite soldierly and straight (literally), with a large, dark, vulgar face. I heard afterward from an officer who held a responsible position that this O. C. D. Section had reported and ruined a number of officers in other regiments.

I mention all this that the reader may know what a Catholic Chaplain was at times up against when called upon to enforce the observance of religion and defend the men under his spiritual charge. On one occasion at Touriani a man asked to come to confession and he was refused leave. He insisted and the post com-

mandant who liked spongecake gave the permit, on which was written: "Pte. ——— has leave to see the R. C. Chaplain spiritually; no military matters are to be discussed. Pte. ——— will be questioned on his return to camp." I sent this extraordinary permit to the Chaplain General, but I am sure it never reached him from the censor's hand. The next letter I received from the adjutant ran: "By last wire O. C. D. Section . . . says he will inquire into all the matters on which you have complained, personally, on his next inspection." The men were still without Sunday mass and I wired to the O. C. D. Section: "I request Catholic men of the ——— Regiment be allowed to come to Divine Service in Parish Church or place be given for Divine Service in Touriani Camp. (Signed) Catholic Chaplain."

The answer came to Post Commandant: "Arrange place in Touriani Post for R. C. soldiers to attend service and inform R. C. Chaplain." The P. C. added: "I have a new banda which I can place at your disposal. It has been available for the last fortnight, but I have received no request from you for its use." Here is the "red tape" wriggling out of it. I did not address myself to the Post Commandant, but I did to the regimental adjutant, who, I am sure, did his part.

What was the condition of the men? They had volunteered in all good faith to fight for their King and their country. Thousands of dollars had been subscribed in the country from which they came and forwarded to a committee, specially formed in London, to provide them with at least the necessary comforts.

all things considered. From the time the draft left Egypt, all through the voyage of the Red Sea, all through the East African campaign, they lived and labored and slept in the same uniform, having had but one. They worked and marched and slept in the open, in all kinds of weather, sunshine and rain, and it was no uncommon thing to see them rising from the wet ground in the morning saturated through and through and the dirty clay caked to their uniform. There was no soap, little water and less time to wash their clothes or themselves. They were in a pitiable condition, but they dared not complain. The punishment was dreadful—No. 1 field punishment, known in the British army as “crucifixion.” This meant that a man was condemned to from 15 to 28 days, to be hung from a post for four hours at a time, his hands and legs tied behind his back, and obliged to face the burning sun, without even his helmet to protect him.

I could not continue to look on at this state of things, so, braving punishment for myself, I wrote to the secretary of the London committee, begging some assistance, at least shoes, stockings and uniforms for these poor fellows. No doubt my letter was opened at the base and probably never reached London. However, it had the desired effect, for some three weeks afterwards clothes, etc., were supplied.

Our men were not the only sufferers. I saw at least one battalion of South Africans returning from the firing line under command of a Colonel Hartigan, of whom these men spoke very highly. They were half naked and shoeless, many of them having their puttees

tied around their bleeding feet, rather than march without shoes. This was at Mrogoro. Their fixed gaze denoted hunger in the extreme, and I asked one of our priests at the mission—a German, as was supposed, but no more a German than I was—to give them something to eat. He could not, of course, feed the whole battalion, but all who could walk to the mission received all the mission had left to give. These men swore vengeance against General Smuts and what they would say and do against him when they returned to what they called the “Union.”

Alas! no wonder that a great American general said, “War is hell.” But what war like the last one? Its inner sufferings will never be told and no wonder that so many ended their own lives.

## CHAPTER XV

### OUR STAY AT TOURIANI AND MHOUDA—A NIGHT VISIT FROM A LION



THE tent in which I lived at Mhonda was between the dugouts of the men and the limit outside of which the Missioners and Sisters were not allowed to move. The officer commanding the post and myself had the hospitality of the Fathers at their own table. Indeed they had little to give now, since all their cattle had been taken away. Some fowls remained, also some pigs. Those, too, would have been taken were it not for the difficulty of driving them. However, far away in the mountains was another mission where no white man except the Fathers and Brothers there had ever penetrated. This mission was reckoned at 30 miles distance, yet every day a good Christian native brought some milk for our use and the use of the refugee German women and children. This was a great saving for the British, who would have been obliged to supply rations.

In the mission there were four Sisters. One taught shoe-making to a number of native boys. Another looked after the garden, where there was a plentiful supply of vegetables, cabbage, salad, beans, peas, potatoes, as well as native food (*chakula*). Here also a number of native boys and girls were taught gardening. The remaining Sister, with the Sister Superior,





WHAT WE SAW ONE AFTERNOON AT MHUNDA

taught in the school. The children were taught in their own beautiful Swahili language. Swahili is not difficult to learn. Just a few words for an example: "Water, *maji*," pronounced majdi; "tea, *chai*;" "potato, *niazi*;" "knife, *kisu*;" "*ndio*, yes;" "*hapana*, no;" "Where is the road to camp? *Wapi nyia campini*?" "How do you do? Good day, *Jambo*;" "How are you? *Haligani*;" "Who are you? *Nani meme*."

The Swahili are a splendid race of people; the men are tall and stately built, but slender. They have a very quick eye and an expressive face, which reflects in a wonderful way their feelings, particularly of joy and sadness. Indeed, sadness rarely enters into their composition—it is a perpetual laugh all day long. Their affection and devotedness to the missionaries are tender and childlike. He is everything to them, their Father, their doctor, their magistrate, all.

The missionaries, on their part, have the consolation of seeing their work amongst the Swahili abundantly fruitful. It is the fruit the seed of which had been planted in tears and sacrifice by the grand missionaries of years ago, who forced their way into the wilds, with no sword but the cross of their Divine Master, no book but their breviary. Down there in the shade of the schoolhouse that was once a church is the silent little cemetery where their bones are resting, their souls on high, while their younger brethren, walking in the footsteps of those who went before, are gathering the sheaves of many a harvest of souls into the home of Mother Church—*ut fructus vester maneat*. Yes, through all the years they have slept in peace, till

the awful war, like hell let loose, swept through the quiet backwoods, whose stillness was stirred only by the waving palm trees, rustled by the passing breeze, singing an evening requiem. How dreadful now, to see their graves trampled by rushing troops, the sacred walls of the mission, where every stone was laid on another by their wan and worn hands, now broken and burst asunder. It is war! war! war! Surely if tears could be shed in heaven, many a bitter tear would fall down from the eyes of those saints in glory over the ruin and wretchedness, destruction and desolation, which the world-war had wrought in those secluded spots, where our early Fathers set the standard of the Master's Cross. The city of peace became the city of Babylon, and the prayers of Christians were hushed in blasphemous hate and human slaughter.

Let us who have seen it and suffered it supplicate Him who calmed the storm and stilled the sea that once again He may call to His standard strong soldiers and wary watchmen, to raise again the ruined walls; men who will hear His voice, who, leaving all things, will follow Him. *Ecce sto ad astium et pulso. Ecce Magister adest et vocat te.* It is a problem which God alone can solve, how are all those missions to be restored? But God will solve it, and many a Catholic young man will, with His grace, arise and come into the breach. In Ireland and in America there are generous and courageous souls who will not harden their hearts when they hear the voice of our Blessed Lord calling them, *veni sequere Me*. Come, follow Me. Who loves father or mother better than Me is un-

worthy of Me. Leave all things and you will have a hundredfold in heaven. Young man, you whom God has preserved, to whom He has given so plentifully in the order of nature and the order of grace, you who feel yourself called to the sanctuary, lift up your eyes and look upon the vast harvest of souls, awaiting laborers on the Dark Continent of Africa. The Master is here at the very door of your heart, knocking. "If you wish to be perfect sell what you have and follow Me." Courage! soldier of the cross, arise quickly at the King's call and answer, *ecce venio*, behold, I come.

Mhonda mission, as I said already, is on the top of a mountain in the midst of a landscape more beautiful than my pen could paint. A refreshing river flows through the grounds over immense rocks, falling over precipice and precipice till it gains the plain and forms the wide river mentioned in the last chapter, the bridge over which the Germans, in their retreat, burned down.

Every kind of wild game abounds in the surroundings, so that in peace time there was no lack of food. Lions are attracted there by the large game, and we had grown quite accustomed to their roaring at night. The roar of a lion in the silent wilderness at night, echoing and re-echoing through the forest, may seem romantic, but when you know that there is nothing between you and him but a piece of canvas all sentimentality disappears. The Catholic men always made the sign of the cross, just as when one sees a flash of lightning. I always made an act of contrition—conscience does make cowards of us all—and so does a

lion at night! An open confession is good for the soul. I was always afraid, and I always felt uncomfortable when I heard the roar of a lion, even at a distance. The Boys knew this, and so two slept in my tent every night—one a boy named de Silva, from British Guiana, who died or was killed later.

One night a lion came to the mission; there was a number of goats in the farmyard and as the lion came they ran pell mell towards my tent, the lion pounding after them. There was a general rush through the cocoanut trees and the goats jumped on a high heap of wood amongst the trees. Back came the lion to my tent. I thought all was over. Every roar the lion gave seemed to shake the canvas. If he jumped on the tent he would crush us to death or drag us from under the canvas into his mouth. The suspense was dreadful. We did not speak a word, but poor de Silva began to sprinkle holy water. The Missions Boys were awakened. They were about 50 in number. They knew what to do. They lighted a number of wooden torches and rushed out shouting with the flaming lights. Lions are frightened by fire, and our lion ran into the forest, roaring to almost awaken the dead as he fled. Thus we were saved from an undesirable death. Would that we could hear the roar of the lion of which St. Peter speaks, ever going around seeking whom he may devour, as we heard the lion that night in Mhouda. We would be more frequently given to saying our prayers and sprinkling the holy water.

One morning I received a note dated 28/9/16. It was from our good adjutant. There were two, one from the adjutant, marked "unofficial," and said:

"Dear Father—I just hate to have to write you these notes which I am sure are disrespectful to you, to you who have been so good to us all. However, you know that I write by order. Affectionately, . . ."

The second note was:

*"From the Adjutant to R. C. Chaplain:*

"Message received from O. C. D. Section to the effect that he is passing through here today and will see the Regimental Chaplain about the questions under discussion. Can you, please, make it convenient to attend this morning as early as possible?"

(Signed) "—————."

At once I went to the camp, where at the entrance I met the scowling termagant, accompanied by the man who liked the spongecake. It was his time to strike. With a vulgar, grating voice, the O. C. D. Section asked, "Are you Captain C.?" "Yes, sir!" I answered, giving him the salute, which he had not the military manners to return. "I'll see you here in this banda," which he entered, I following. He sat on a rustic table, pulling his moustache wildly and shaking with anger. Outside, like an office boy, stood at attention the man who liked the spongecake.

The O. C. D. Section had letters in his hand. "I want to see you about these impertinent letters which you have written your O. C."

"Sir," I said, "if you will be good enough to point out any impertinent expression, I shall be glad to ask your leave to withdraw it and apologize."



Whether it was the calmness of my answer that enraged him still more I do not know, but he fumbled with the letters, looking for the flaw.

"Perhaps," I said again, "you take exception to the word 'extraordinary,' and if so please allow me to explain my meaning."

"Yes," he said, "what do you mean?"

"If the order forbidding our men to attend mass in the Parish Church was the fear of their molesting the natives, such could not occur, because the men marched in ranks under the command of an officer and, moreover, they are Catholics. If you object to the Church as being under the jurisdiction of German priests it does seem to me extraordinary that such a prohibition should exist here in Mhouda, while in Bazamayo the admiral who bombarded and took that place attends mass in the Parish Church there every Sunday, with his men, and mass is celebrated not by an English Chaplain but by one of the local priests, who are Germans."

"Say 'Sir' to me," he stormed, "when you address me."

"I addressed you 'Sir,' when I began my conversation and I consider that sufficient."

"You are a soldier, and I don't care a damn whatever else you are. I must have you removed from here."

"Is that all?" I asked.

"Yes, you can go," pointing to the entrance. Then he yelled, "Allow me out first. I'll make you respect

me," and passing out he mumbled something like "the calmness of these fanatics."

There were a number of private soldiers of other regiments within hearing, and all soldiers, whatever their religion, respected a Chaplain. They gathered round me, expressing their sympathy.

"Oh! sir, they said that man is a devil, and he looks like one."

"Aye," said another, "and talks like one."

"Boys," I said, "that kind of interview is a small thing to me. I have my duty to do to God and to the soldiers of my Church, and I hope I shall always do it fearlessly."

I immediately wrote to the G. O. C., or I. G. C., to be correct, the following:

"*Sir*—Permit me to respectfully call your attention to a very extraordinary scene enacted yesterday forenoon, 28/9/16, by Lt. Col. ———, in which he subjected me to gross insult and invective in hearing of a number of private soldiers.

"Some days ago I wrote a protest to an order of the O. C. D. Section, by which he excluded the Parish Church, Mhouda, as a place where the Catholic men of the ——— Regiment might assist at Divine Service on Sundays. No answer was given to this letter until Sunday morning, 24/9/16, when too late for mass. Thus the Catholic men were deprived for two Sundays of Divine Service."

I then related what had occurred between the O. C. D. Section and the Catholic Chaplain, and concluded:

"May I respectfully ask, Sir, what is the meaning of all this? Had Lt. Col. ——— authority to call me to stand any trial or court-martial? My complaint was against an order issued by the O. C. D. Section which deprived Catholic men of my regiment in Touriani post to attend mass on Sundays. Was he the fit officer to investigate such a grievance, when the complaint was against himself? He said he was authorized by the general to do so. I submit, Sir, respectfully, that I should have got due notice and in writing, if such authority had been given him. There is a Chaplains' department through which complaints against Chaplains should be addressed. Lt. Col. ——— said he was sending you a report against me. I request to see it.

"Sir, I have done nothing but my duty as Chaplain, namely, to strive and give the consolations of religion to those under my spiritual charge.

"I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant."

There was no answer from the I. G. C. The reader will naturally tire of this correspondence, but it is necessary to follow it if he wishes to understand subsequent outrageous treatment, when he might ask, "Why would they do such a thing?"

I shall ask indulgence for the giving of one other letter written by the O. C. of the regiment. It was written subsequent to my interview with the S. African O. C. D. Section. Its tone shows the relations and feelings always friendly, which existed between me and the officers of my own battalion (First Div.):

*"Dear Father—*The battalion moves to Mrogoro this afternoon. I could not get a horse for you, and the P. C. says there are no lorries going forward any more, only light cars and mule transports.

"Lt. ——— and the clothing for the men should be in tonight or tomorrow, and together with Capt. ——— (who liked spongecake) will be coming on in two or three days time. Perhaps it will be more comfortable for you to come on with them, as I have no means of giving you a lift.

"My own fly-bitten horse is being ridden by ——— (the adjutant), who is a bit seedy. I proceed to Mrogoro only at present.

"3/10/16.

H. C. V. R., Capt. O. C."

Surely one can see the difference here between the gentleman, which our O. C. was every inch, and the upstart. This was Tuesday, and the march from Touriani to Mrogoro was 75 miles, as reckoned by the missionaries. The men would be there by the following Sunday, and at any cost I must be there to say mass for them. The missionaries engaged four native carriers at my expense, not the government's, to carry my kit. My orderly remained with me.

Accordingly, having said holy mass for the last time in Mhonda, where I should have loved to live and die, that I might rest with the saints whose bodies were reposing there in the little cemetery, awaiting the angel's trumpet call to join their souls in glory—I prepared to go. The good Fathers marked out my itinerary: The first day's march to a place called School-house, about 17 miles; the second day to the Waami

River, 35 miles; the third day to Mrogoro, 25 miles. Our new post commandant was a Scotchman, an officer of our First Battalion, a real Celt, with a heart of gold. He gave me the following rations, the very best he could give me and my orderly for the three days' journey: 1½ lbs. of flour, 6 oz. of sugar, some broken dog biscuits and 1 lb. of bacon! The good Sisters added something more, which I carried in my haversack—a cooked chicken, some boiled potatoes, salad, a little salt and half a loaf of black bread. Excellent! The Fathers and the Mission Boys walked with me to the limit of their 50 yards, where stood an immense Cross with the figure of Christ nailed upon it. There we said the *Itinerarium Clericorum*, as found in the Roman breviary, and with a fond good-bye and *au revoir au ciel*, with many an affectionate kwaheri (good bye) from the Boys of the Mission, with my four carriers and my orderly, I began my journey. I promised to send the Boys some “nguv” (clothing), but I regret that ever since I have not been in a position to do it. Perhaps some kind reader of these lines may in his generosity redeem my promise and send an offering for clothing to the Superior of Mhouda Mission, through His Lordship, Monsignor Vogt, Vicar Apost, Bagamoyo, German East Africa.

After we had marched about ten miles a heavy down-pour of rain fell, which turned the deep dust of the road into mud, and the ruts and holes into pools of water. The ambulances, bringing the sick and wounded down from the firing line, got stuck in the way and could not proceed to Touriani. Their human

freight of sufferers left the ambulances to try and walk, expecting to find a hospital at Touriani. Alas! there was no hospital within 150 miles, at Hendeni.

As they left the ambulances they began to fall one by one into the mud and pools of water on the road, there to lie and die. Two wornout soldiers, about 40 years of age, continued to drag themselves along till they reached me. They were chewing dry grass. "For God's sake," said one, "will you give me something to eat?" I had but little for ourselves, but who could refuse such an appeal? I took from my haversack two limbs of my cooked chicken and gave it to them. *O mon Dieu!* What an awful sight two human beings, mad with want and hunger! They stuffed the pieces of chicken into their mouths, bone and all. They could not chew it, and I think they must have choked, for they fell on the road. I tried to raise one, but could not. My orderly stood gazing and said: "Come along, Father; you can do nothing. We must reach 'School-house' before the lions come out." Quite true. I could do nothing, so, half blinded with my tears, I went on silently and thinking how little the world knows of all the misery of this dreadful war, waged to feed the appetite of the greed and jealousy of crowned heads.


*"The kings of the earth stood up and the  
princes met together. Let us break their bonds  
and let us cast away their yoke from us. He  
that dwellest in heaven shall laugh at them."*

—Ps. II: 2, 3, 4.



## CHAPTER XVI

### JOURNEY TO THE WAAMI RIVER

T WAS late when we reached "Schoolhouse" and the lions were out and roaring for food. They must have suffered some disappointment, because I never heard them roar as they did that night. The Schoolhouse was an old thatched shack, with several native huts around. When the natives saw my uniform, thinking I carried arms, they fled for their lives, until one of the carriers, who was a Christian, assured them that I was a Père, and had been saying mass at the mission. They returned one by one. Poor people! They were naked. I said, "Jambo, mimi. Père, apana askari" ("Good night. I am a Father, not a soldier"). "Tazama" ("look"), and I showed them my crucifix. They all began to talk. One, who was probably a chief, said to the others: "Kilele! lala chisu" ("Silence! Lie down") "Wake moto yote," which I understood to be "Light the fire," for at once all got busy to make a fire in front of the shack. The chief probably saw I was afraid, the lions were roaring so, and they seemed so near. "Apana simba, Père" ("No lion, Father.") I saw in the light of the fire that some wore a little covering and I presumed they were women. Poor creatures, in their respect for a Priest they did not come near. My orderly made some beds with dried leaves and something else which the natives gave him and, tired out, I

went to sleep. The following morning—it was the first Friday of October—I said mass under a coffee tree, all the natives, men, women and children, assisting with great devotion. They were all Catholics. During mass my orderly made some coffee supplied by the natives and also some goat's milk to color it. Besides, we had our six ounces of sugar. I ate a splendid breakfast, *café au lait*, and a slice of brown bread. The natives also gave us some eggs, which we boiled hard. They proved delicious at the next meal. I kept the cooked chicken for my orderly. He was young and needed it more than I.

It was sunrise, about 5:30 o'clock, when I said mass, after which, regaled and strengthened, we started on our second day's route. At 7 o'clock, some three miles on the march, I came on a post of our men with an officer. He came from the island of Grenada and I shall always remember him as a very dear friend, but above all for his invariable kindness to the Boys. Many of the men were stricken with fever and other ailments. What little I had of medical comforts I administered—to some fruit salt, to others quinine. There was a long journey before us, one in an unknown country, so, much as I desired to, I could not tarry long with the Boys. I wonder now how many of them still live to read this and recall the circumstances?

On through the vast prairies, under the scorching sun, we marched and marched until 1 P. M. We all sat down in the wild waste. The carriers ate their *chakula*, rice, bananas, etc. My orderly made a fire and some coffee, while I ate my hard boiled eggs and salt and

some more black bread. There was still sufficient chicken left for the Boy. How I could have lain down there, even in the blazing fire from the heavens, and slept and slept!

On we had to go, at the peril of our lives. We had to reach the Waami River before nightfall. I pitied my orderly, because I knew he was very tired and keeping up for my sake. Just like all the other roads, this one, too, had an end. We pulled ourselves into the camp at the Waami River somehow. It was about 5:30 o'clock. To my great delight I found here one of our officers, an Englishman, with another lot of the men who had fallen out through sickness.

The battle had just been over, and the dead, or parts of the bodies of the dead, were strewn about, though not for long. Millions of rats came up out of the dry river bed and cleaned up everything. It was bad enough to be eaten by a lion, but to be eaten by rats was worse still!

The officer had a little hut which he offered to share with me for shelter, and with a kindness which he had always shown me throughout our whole campaign, both in Egypt and East Africa, he offered me a part of his humble rations. It consisted of a piece of fried sheep's liver, which I tried very hard to eat, but even though I closed my eyes it would not go down. I hope sincerely that our lives may come together once again to talk over that and many other incidents in which he always stood by me.

The rats were awful! They were running around us like young cats, gnawing and scraping. "Lieuten-

ant," I said, "I am not going to sleep here, with these wretched rats running about." "They won't do you any harm," said the lieutenant, half gaily. "I don't mind them." "Every one to his taste," said I, "like the man who kissed his cow." His orderly, de Silva, the same who sprinkled the holy water when the lion came at Mhouda, said: "Father, get up on this heap of wood and I'll make a covering for you with this sheet iron." "Right you are, de Silva," I said, and, suiting the action to the word, I climbed on the wood. I cannot say that I slept. One never does when very tired, and the wood was hard. Yet I rested and got forty winks now and again.

I am tempted to tell a little incident. It will not interest the reader, but I must tell it in the hope that the person whom it concerns recovered and may still be living. Perhaps these lines may fall his way, and bring me to his memory as he still lives in mine. De Silva came to me and said, "Father, there is a young white man lying under a pile of wood. He is very ill and you may be able to do something for him." I went to see him. His temperature was 105° and his hectic face and glassy eyes gave sign of death. I asked him a few questions. He was a young English planter from around Nairobi, B. E. A., and he left his plantation to join the colors. He had never been ill in his life before, and he was so lonely—dying there, away from every friend. My heart went out to him as I held his burning hand, and I thought, Who knows how many are thinking of him and wondering what he was doing at that moment? He told me in answer to a

question that he was not a Catholic and I explained why I asked. He said something about his mother, and that word seemed to cut me like a knife.

Just then our lieutenant called me. The captain who commanded the camp was in his shack and wished to see me. He was a nice young fellow and after a hearty shake of hands he produced a flask of whiskey. "Take some of this, Padre," he said, "It will do you good after your long march." I took some, and it certainly did me good. I told him about my sick Boy and asked if I might give him what remained. "Certainly, Padre; and here, take more." I got some quinine from my haversack and dissolved ten grains in a little of the whiskey in the cover of my mess tin. Some more I put in my cup, with five grains and a little water. I gave this to the Boy, and with the whiskey and ten grains I massaged him from head to feet. I then rolled him in his great coat, and in a few minutes he began to perspire. In two hours I gave him five grains of phenacetin and the water began to ooze out freely from every pore. He fell into a deep sleep. I would have remained with him, but, coward that I was, I feared the rats who were running about in all directions. The following morning he was as bright as a lark and his temperature down to 100°. That was the last I saw of him. Is it too much to hope that I may hear from him some day, that he has lived through it to be well and happy?

At the first light everyone was astir, and the Boys, non-Catholics as well as Catholics, fixed a place for an altar at the back of Lieut. B.'s shack. I said mass,

at which all assisted. Coffee was now plentiful. It grew all around us so I had some, with sugar, but milk there was none. The post commandant informed me that an ambulance would be leaving for Mrogoro at 8 A. M. and that I could have a lift the whole way, 25 miles. I thought it best to send my orderly instead to join the battalion than leave him behind. I knew that in any case I would stand a better chance than he later on to get a transport. Accordingly I sent him on the ambulance, telling him to report immediately on arrival, to report me as coming on that same evening—it was Saturday—and then to inquire for the Catholic mission and there report me for a room.

The Boy left on the ambulance at 8 o'clock and I started on foot at 9 o'clock. I knew my feet had been bleeding, but I dared not take off my shoes, because I knew I could not get them on again. I had no rations for this journey, but I had grown so accustomed to go without food I never felt hungry. My carriers knew the road, so on and on I went until, within five miles of Mrogoro, a passing transport took me up. The sergeant had chewing gum and he gave me some. It was better than nothing, at least it kept my mouth moist. As we came in sight of Mrogoro we met some natives selling bananas and tomatoes. I bought some and broke my fast somehow. The tomatoes mixed admirably with the bananas. The transport dropped me in the middle of the town and at the spot I met two of our own men.

Mrogoro is a fine town, of Oriental style, with handsome houses and a few large public buildings. The



streets and houses are well shaded with long lines of palm trees. The place bore, of course, the appearance of the late great explosion. It was at Mrogoro that the Germans had their large munition factory, and, seeing that further fighting against such terrible odds was impossible, they blew up the factory and retired into Kisaki, where were all their stores and provisions. I never heard that the British had driven them from that place of retreat.

The main line of railway from Dar es Salaam to Tabora passed through Mrogoro. That railway was 700 miles in length and much of it had been blown up by the Germans. They ran all their trains to a large bridge over a deep, yawning precipice, blew up the bridge and all the engines and coaches fell topsyturvy on top of one another. The British afterwards repaired this somewhat, but it was most dangerous and many accidents occurred at that spot.

Arrived then in Mrogoro, I went with the two men I had met to the camp, which I found pitched on the mission grounds at five minutes' walk from the mission itself. The men were making their dugouts, and in the avenue leading to the mission I met my orderly waiting for me. I asked if he had reported me and he replied in the affirmative, so we went to the mission. At the entrance I met Father Schulte, who was very much excited and upset. I asked what was the matter. Ever since the British soldiers had occupied the place they were committing inexpressible outrages on the female population, taking the people's cattle, knocking down their huts to get building material for themselves.

and now they were taking the Christians prisoners, among them many catechists, to employ them in forced labor. I went with him to render what assistance I could. The natives were all in confusion, bundling up their belongings and flying to the woods and mountains. The most atrocious outrages were committed on those poor people by the British military. A poor native, whose whole property consisted of two goats which were with young, were demanded by the military for slaughter. The man explained as best he could in Swahili that the goats were not in condition to be killed, when one of the soldiers ran his bayonet through the animals, leaving them dead. It was I who wrote the report in English of this outrage and advised the man to bring the dead animals to the commandant to let him see for himself.

There were a Frenchman and his wife, a British subject from the Seychelles Islands, refugees at the mission when I arrived there. This Frenchman had a sad tale to tell. He was tied to a tree by British soldiers, while his house was looted and everything, animals, clothes, all that he possessed, were taken, except the clothes which he and his wife were wearing. They tried to wrest his watch from him, but he held to it, while they tore off the ring of the watch. In order to secure a passage to the Seychelles for himself and his wife he was obliged to destroy the list of his charges of outrage against the military as a condition, *sine qua non*, of his obtaining a free passage. Decency prevents me from going into detail in speaking of the outrages committed on Father Vogel of Mketé (not

sure of the name of his mission), but if he lives, I hope he will be able to tell it for himself. One can easily see what an unwelcome arrival was mine, in the midst of all this, especially as I clearly gave those in command to understand that I was a member of the Order to which the mission and the mission property belonged and I protested against the loot and destruction perpetrated.

It was Saturday evening, I said, just as the Angelus was ringing, that I arrived at Mrogoro mission. I sent at once notice to our adjutant that I would say mass the following morning at the usual hour, 9:30 o'clock, for the men, and that I was passing the night in the mission. There was a hard task before me, to take off my shoes and stockings, since the preceding Wednesday. The description of the operation is not inviting, but to get my stockings off, clinging as they were with clotted blood to my feet, I had to tear away the skin with the same quick action as if removing a black blister. No use of prolonging the agony by gentleness. I slept as one could sleep after a march of 75 miles, but next morning I could not get my shoes on, my feet were too swollen. One of the Fathers gave me a large pair of shoes, and some way I limped down to the camp, a Mission Boy carrying a table on which to place my portable altar. About 60 men were present, many of them non-Catholics, for they were all glad to see their Padre.

The men sang the usual hymns, which no doubt attracted a number of very large monkeys. They gathered around, some hanging from trees, others standing

on the ground, and I was frightened lest they should attack us. Fortunately the men had their rifles, which they carry always in active service, and their bayonets. However, the monkeys assisted most respectfully and, mass over, they scattered in hundreds through the forest. I returned to the mission, where I broke my fast for the first time since having eaten the bananas and tomatoes the preceding day.

The Mrogoro Mission, the oldest after Zanzibar, is on a high mountain which overlooks the immense prairie forest for miles and miles, as far as the eye can see. Sitting on the back gallery in the evening out there in the forest, may be seen every species of wild animal in thousands. There they feed quietly, with generally a giraffe on guard. He walks around the troop, sniffing the air, on the lookout for the coming of lions which he is said to be able to smell at a distance of ten miles. When the giraffe perceives the danger he gives some kind of signal and instantly the entire forest is cleared. Soon afterwards the lions, lionesses and cubs appear, and when disappointed set up a roaring which some missionaries say they need in order to go to sleep. I do not know. I know only this, that I felt most uncomfortable. Leopards visited the mission every night in search of any animal they could find. The Fathers set traps for them and they are caught in great numbers. The skins are valuable and are sold to European merchants, thus deriving an income to the mission.

Let me here return to the Fathers at Mrogoro Mission my profound thanks for their great kindness and sympathy in all my suffering while there.

## CHAPTER XVII

### NEW ORDERS



WAS seated on the verandah with the Community, dictating some new privileges, amongst others the three masses on All Souls' Day, given by the present Holy Father, for they had not received the "Ordo" for 1915 and 1916, when one of our men, coming from the camp, handed me the following note:

*"The (Hon.) Capt. C., R. C. Chaplain:*

"1. In pursuance of written orders just to hand from the O. C. D. Section, I am to inform you that you are not permitted either to stay at or visit the R. C. Mission, Mrogoro.

"2. You will, therefore, please return to camp this afternoon. Carriers for your baggage will be sent up after lunch.

"3. Should you require quarters, apply through this office in the usual manner and the application will be forwarded to the post commandant, Mrogoro.

"4. Please be warned that disregard of these orders will compel me to detain you under arrest in this camp.

"H. C. V. P., Capt. O. C."

I was about to obey, for obedience sake, even though I had to walk without shoes which, owing to the condition of my feet, I could not put on, when a friend contrived to send me another note:

"Beware of accepting other quarters. They have wicked designs on you. They have no power to place you under arrest. It is mere bluff, in order to get hold of you."

Immediately I wrote to the O. C.:

"I am in receipt of your letter and noted its contents. I have noted especially your warning of arrest, which I await with pleasure. (Signed) ———."

A short time after delivery of this note a young lieutenant, accompanied by two corporals, with fixed bayonets, came to the mission. I met them on the verandah. Having returned the salute, I said: "Lieutenant, if you have been sent to arrest me, do so, as you may otherwise get into trouble."

"No, Father," he said, "I am not to arrest you. Just give me a note to say that I have come here."

I did so. The following Wednesday I received written orders from the C.-in-C. (General Smuts) to proceed immediately to Dar es Salaam and report to the I. G. C. And now it will be understood why I wrote all that precedes. This order was signed "O. C. D. Section." That afternoon two of the men on outpost duty around the mission asked to see me, greatly concerned. "Are you going, Father?" asked one. "Going where? You seem to know all about it." "Oh, yes, Father. A telegram has come through. Your orderly will not be allowed to come to you. All the Boys are in a state about you. We fear for your safety." I may say that I have a copy of that telegram from the O. C. D. Section. I reassured the men that nothing evil would happen to me; that I was going



to Dar es Salaam in obedience to order, and that I would reach there safely. I then received a note from one of our officers, a true friend, and, though I liked them all, he was my favorite, saying that he would come for me at 10 o'clock that night, with carriers for my baggage, and escort me to the station.

I do not know if the Fathers suspected any danger. I often thought since that they did, for they did not like the idea of my going, but they did not interfere. I went to Benediction, the October devotions were on, and said night prayer with the Community, after which I bade them adieu in silence. It was a beautiful moonlight night, so I sat in a "rocker" in the gallery, looking down on the garden some 20 feet below. Suddenly a leopard jumped upon the verandah, and as I with equal suddenness jumped up, he got frightened and disappeared. I remembered that one of the Fathers remarked that he had heard a leopard some nights previous prowling on the gallery, and though it was not thought likely, I was now convinced that he was right.

At 10 o'clock I heard the tramp of the officer and men. So when they arrived we lost no time in setting out for the railway station, about a mile away. It was very lonely, and though the moon was bright it seemed to add to the loneliness. The train was scheduled to leave at 11 o'clock P. M., but on arrival we were informed that there would be no train before 8 o'clock next morning. Lieutenant J. asked me to return to the camp, but I refused. He then offered to remain with me and again I refused. He might

have got himself into trouble and, moreover, he had malaria, and high fever that night. I advised him to return quickly to camp, assuring him all would be well with me.

I sat on my kit, my back resting against the wooden railing around the station. I took out my rosary and if ever I said it fervently it was there that night all alone, at Mrogoro Station. I heard no lions, but the hyenas kept up that weird kind of wail so well known in Africa, when at night they smell something dead. The country all over was filled with the loathsome stench of dead cattle lying about the roadsides. Hyenas are not dangerous and they never come near human habitations. Now, looking back, it does seem strange to me that I had no misgivings and though alone I did not feel the least fear. I fingered away at my rosary, I felt the protecting hand of God and my eyes remained wide open without the least inclination to sleep. It was lucky for me, as we shall see in the next chapter, that my eyes did remain open, though I had nothing much to lose. "*Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator*"—a penniless man has nothing to lose.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### HOMO HOMINI LUPUS

**T**HE night was remarkably calm and beautifully bright, as moonlight nights always are in the East. At midnight a man in civilian garb entered the station and saluted me, "Good night." He spoke with a foreign accent, and I was astonished to see a civilian enter a railway station in an enemy country, apparently without let or hindrance. There were placards all around forbidding, under severe penalties, anyone but military to come within a certain distance of railways, etc. At first I took this man as having escaped from the German internment camp close by, but he was too cool for that. "No train?" he asked. "Not before tomorrow morning," I answered, and with that he coolly went and stretched himself in a lorry. I watched him closely in the moonlight while strange fears began to flit into my mind. I put those thoughts away as well as I could, and kept on at my rosary. After perhaps an hour the stranger got up and came to me.

"Are you," he said, "the Rev. C., — Regiment?"

"Yes," I said, surprised that he should know my name.

"Do you know," he asked solemnly, "why I am here?"

"No, sir," I answered, "but I suspect."

A cold feeling came on me and in my heart I called on the Holy Name, and I called on the "Little

Flower," whose protection I felt all through my campaign. I think now that I said a great many prayers in that one moment.

"Sir," I said, "do not have my blood upon your hands. I have done no wrong to anyone. I have always defended my Boys. I was their only friend, and you would not kill me for that."

The stranger—a young man of seemingly thirty to thirty-five years old—took out of his inside pocket some instrument, and removed it from a leather cover. It seemed like a dagger, but it may have been a revolver. I was perfectly awake, though I thought I was going to faint. I still remained seated on my kit.

"No," he said, "I will not. I heard some of you men speak about you. I see it all. But you just stay here and I will protect you," and he returned the instrument to his pocket.

"Thank you," I said. "I shall not forget you. Are you a German?"

"No," he answered, "but I speak German and I speak French better. English I do not know very well."

"Then," said I, "we shall speak French," and in French I again thanked him.

He sat down beside me and told me a terrible story, which he asked me never to reveal, and I never shall.

"I will protect you," he said, "and see you safe in Dar es Salaam."

Candidly, I did not trust him yet, though we chatted till morning in French. When morning came I felt a great relief, but I had a dangerous journey of 200 miles before me. The morning came and no train all day

long. I stood and paced up and down the railway platform. In the afternoon my new acquaintance came to me and said, "You had better leave here. You see that large shed over yonder? Follow me there." I did as he directed and soon he brought me a cup of coffee and some biscuits out of the shed. I was not inside.

The shed was between me and the railway. In the distance I saw Lieut. Bell and Lieut., now Captain, Johnstone, who, I am rejoiced to hear, is safely back in his home. They seemed to be looking for some one and I thought it was for me, because they looked in my direction.

"Those two officers are looking out for me," I said in French. "I must go and see them."

"On no account," said my companion. "Pull down your helmet over your face." And I did. I was at his mercy. I wonder now if those two officers saw me.

The day passed and at 7:30 in the evening—it was now dark—an auto truck—there were no trains, all had been blown up by the Germans—drew up for the Chaplain. My kit was taken on another, and my friend on a third truck. I was alone, with the driver in front. We had gone some 90 miles when we came to a standstill. I do not remember the name of the place, but it was at a point where a road led to Kisaki, where the Germans were supposed to be. There was a part of our regiment, amongst them my orderly. The poor Boy was very excited and wanted to accompany

me. "Father," he said, "they are going to do something to you."

"If God permits, Leo," I said. "His will be done, but I feel he will protect me." I then believed that the Boys knew something. This was the last time that I saw poor Leo, R. I. P.

The whistle blew and the Boys left me. Then came my friend and said, "Do not travel in that lorry."

"How, then, shall I travel?" I asked. "I must reach Rufu to get a train for Dar es Salaam."

"Take that bundle with you"—it was my vestments, chalice, altar stone, etc.—"and march," he said, solemnly.

"Good heavens!" I said, "Walk in this wild and lonely country and in the dead of night, not knowing where the enemy may be?"

"No matter," was the answer, "do as I tell you."

There was no way out of it but to go. I tied my bundle on my back, took to the road and walked. I shudder now to think of that lonely walk of 19 miles. I do not remember having heard any lions, nor, indeed, any other animal, not even a stir in the jungle along the road. *A la garde de Dieu*. I marched along. I can tell no more about it now, but I reached Rufu about sunrise next morning.

There, too, were a few of our men and a Catholic Boy. There were, I remember now, two or three, and they fixed a place for me to say mass. When their officer rose and heard that I was there, he sent for the men and forbade them to hold any communication with me. I did not blame him. He was young



and he had his orders. Of himself he would not have done it. As I finished mass a young soldier, who told me he came from Bermuda and that he was a Catholic, expressed his great regret that he had not known I was there. He would have been so glad to go to Confession and Holy Communion, a blessing he had not had since the war began. He was employed in the quartermaster's store, and he was good enough to give me some black coffee and a dog biscuit.

On my way to look for some water to wash, as I was covered with dust and dirt from the road, I noticed a group of soldiers chatting and from them I learned that one of the trucks had jumped the track during the night and a chaplain was believed to have been killed. "*Dieu merci!*" I said, "No, the Chaplain is alive." My friend came along and whispered, "N'en dites rien, tenez vous tranquille." It was good advice and I followed it. There I met the Boy who received the famous telegram. All's well that ends well, and I had much to thank God for.

That was Friday evening, and I had had nothing to eat since I left the Mrogoro Mission, the preceding Wednesday, except the odd cup of coffee. We left by train this same evening, this time a real train, for Dar es Salaam. I got a place in a covered truck with 36 others. Three of us were officers, one was a hospital orderly, and all the others were sick and dying. In other trucks were some 60 German prisoners. It was an awful night! It was like the very porch of hell! All those stricken human beings lying helpless on the floor of the truck, without even one drop of water to

quench their fever-thirst. Wailing cries, in the Holy Name of Christ, for one drop of water, and blasphemous replies from the hospital orderly were kept up all night. "How can you get water here in the wilderness?" "Shut your d—— mouth." "Oh, I'm dying, I'm dying." "Well, die and be damned to you," would cry another, "and let us sleep."

God help me! I have never suffered the pain of thirst through all my campaign. I rarely felt the thirst which the Boys felt in the burning sun of Egypt and the killing sun of Africa. Hunger I did feel, but somehow I got so accustomed to be without food I never felt an appetite. Of course, I drank water just when I saw others drink it, but I never felt the real pain of thirst. Yet I know from what I experienced during that awful night journeying from Rufu that the pain of thirst is excruciating. These poor wretches were all dying of dysentery, and the excessive absorption of their very vitals, their blistered lips and the burning fire of fever within them must have drained every drop of liquid in their system. They cursed the army doctors, they cursed the war, they cursed General Smuts, they cursed the King until their burning tongues could move no more. Sometimes they sang like maniacs, and I suppose they were demented. Oh! the cruelty of throwing those poor human carcasses there in that truck to die in such agony when at least some water could have been carried to soothe their last moments. Very probably they volunteered with the same high hopes and dreams that enticed so many brave young men to leave their homes to fight, alas!

for what? The reason was never yet given—the real, true cause of the late war. The President of the American Republic once asked the question. The Pope asked it before him. Were they ever answered? Perhaps they were, but I never saw the answer.

One by one the voices of these poor sufferers grew weaker and fainter till the sound died away with a low moan. How many of them died in the truck I do not know, but at dawn the train stopped and we were ordered out. I saw some living soldiers dragging the dead men out and throwing them on the ground along the sidings. I turned my head away in horror, and from my heart I begged the good God to receive the souls of those dead heroes and to accept their unspeakable shrieks of torture for the sake of Him who died on Calvary's Cross, thirsting for human souls. That was all I could do. I would have welcomed a few tears, but none would flow. I felt like petrified wood. I felt ashamed—just because I could do nothing! One poor fellow, still living, tried to crawl out of the truck and I ran to help him. His clothes were in a revolting condition. I was not able to hold him up and one of the German prisoners came to assist me, but he was instantly ordered back to the gang. I helped the sick man to sit against a bank of clay, and then some soldier brought him water. I went away, and I thanked God and the Church for my breviary, because I wanted something to do. I could not have prayed otherwise, for no prayer would come to me.

Pardon me, gentle reader, if by relating this I have aroused any unholy thought within you. *Homo*

*Homini Lupus*, but God is Love. Look on the Cross, look on the Master's mangled body, "a worm and no man." Listen to the throbbing of His great Heart, look at His parched lips opening, and unite in His prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

It was 10:30 A. M. when we reached Dar es Salaam and then, no end of reporting. I had to report to the landing officer. I had to report to the base commandant. I had to report to the I. G. C. I had then to ask for quarters, but they had none to give, and finally I was directed to ask for quarters in the Benedictine Monastery. Oh! what a difference when I went there. The saintly Bishop Spicer met me at the door, and when I told him I was a Holy Ghost Father he threw his arms around me. "Welcome," said the Bishop, "your home is here." He showed me to a room where I had a most refreshing wash and shave. Then His Lordship took me to the Cathedral, where I said holy mass. It was the 14th of October, feast of St. Caliste, who while he was in prison licked the ulcers of a poor soldier and thereby restored him to health. That was all the preparation I made for holy mass, for, God forgive me, I had to hang my head in shame when I contrasted the Saints' conduct with mine when I remembered how I shrank from the soiled clothes of the poor soldier whom I saw that morning crawling out of the truck. *Cor contritem et humiliatum Deus non despicias* was all I could say before I made my confession to the Bishop, and I shall never forget his few consoling words and they were these, "*Fili mi,*

*Deus bonus.*" I said mass in honor of St. Caliste that he might cleanse the ulcers of sin from the souls of the poor soldiers that had just died on the way and restore them to that everlasting health that shall never weaken, where there are no woes and no wars. What shall I say of the kindness of Bishop Spicer and his excellent Benedictine Community? Words fail me to express my gratitude. They were Germans and so were prisoners in their own house, but they accepted with humility all the restrictions which were placed on them by those in occupation. They kept up their religious exercises just as usual with a brightness and gaiety that astonished me.

It was just lunch hour when I finished mass. His Lordship took me with the Community to the Refectory. The Bishop intoned the "Benedicite," and the Community chanted "Benedicite." "Oculi omnium," again intoned the Bishop, and the Fathers took up the "In te sperant," etc. It was the first time I heard the blessing before meals chanted, and it greatly impressed me, especially when I thought of all the infamy that was being enacted outside of these hallowed walls. The meal was taken in silence, as is always done in monasteries. I did feel hungry, for this was the first meal I had had since the preceding Wednesday, and this was Saturday at noon. I took but very little when I found it was sufficient. It was even too much, for it brought on dysentery, and for the first time in all the campaign I fell ill. . . .

I heard from His Lordship that there were four of our Coadjutor Brothers (of the Congregation of the

Holy Ghost) prisoners there in Dar es Salaam. I went to visit them and, with the permission of the provost marshal, a very charming young officer, I think a captain in rank, was permitted to see them and speak with them. They were Alsations and spoke French. Not being priests, they were compelled to fight for Germany. There they were in the common prison of Dar es Salaam, a prison built for the natives. There were seven in the cell. Just think of it, seven men cooped up in a narrow prison cell in the sweltering heat of East Africa! The air was so foul and, not feeling well, I had to stand at the door. They were not allowed to leave the cell, their food, whatever it was, being put in through a hole in the door, just as if they had been condemned criminals. I hope they are still living and that some day they will tell in more graphic words than mine their barbarous treatment as prisoners of war under British South African rule. The provost marshal must have been an Englishman, at least he had nothing of the boorish barbarity of a Boer about him.

These Brothers had not had an opportunity of assisting at mass nor of approaching the sacraments since the war began, and there was not a single nook or corner in the prison where I could offer holy mass. I saw the P. M. and asked if he would allow the Brothers to come to mass the following morning in the Cathedral, which was right beside the prison.

"With the greatest pleasure, Padre," he answered. "At what hour?"



“At any hour, sir,” I said, “that will suit the rules and you.”

“Well, say, 7 o’clock in the morning. How would that do?”

“Splendid, sir, I am indeed very grateful to you. It does one good to speak with a gentleman, after what I have been up against.”

Next morning the Brothers came to mass en parole, and I do hope that I shall soon hear from them now that peace is signed, and hear that they are back in their mission, working like all their Brethren in the Congregation. *Ad majorem Dei gloriam.*

## CHAPTER XIX

### PLEIN DE SOI-MENE



NEEDLESS to say that my stay with the good Benedictine Community was attended with happiness and every comfort that straitened conditions could bestow. The soldiers know what it means to lie on a spring bed after months on the ground, to be able to wash with soap and water every morning. I knew it, too; yea, more, I knew and appreciated the change of rough, commanding voices for the soft prayerful call of the "Benedicamus Domino." I did enjoy that calm repose, and the pleasant recreations with the Fathers and their efforts to carry on an English conversation.

Over the table in my room hung a card and on it artistically painted a passion flower, around which ran the words "AND JESUS WAS SILENT." Strange, I never remembered having seen these words detached from the sacred text before, but they impressed me profoundly. I took them to indicate the silence that should be observed in a religious house. Just as we see oftentimes the word "SILENCE" hanging in the Sacristy, but somehow, instead of being silent words, they seemed to have a voice that drummed itself into my ears. Every time I raised my eyes from my breviary, or from any book I was reading, there were the words, "AND JESUS WAS SILENT."

One morning a soldier came with a letter from the Base D. A. A. G., addressed

"*To Capt. C.*—Please note you are not to call on the I. G. C. this afternoon, but at 10:30 A. M. tomorrow morning."

So much the better, I thought, as I was indeed very ill and weak with dysentery, for which I had no remedy except some belladonna pills given me by a German sea captain who was interned at the mission.

It was Friday morning, the twentieth of October. I went to the office of the I. G. C. After a short time waiting in the vestibule of a beautiful residence, I was ushered into the almighty presence of the I. G. C. *Plein de soi-meme*. He was the same pompous, well-groomed little officer who once ordered our regiment out of Korogwe camp, because the South Africans objected to our presence in their dignified company, and the Y. M. C. A. could not be expected to serve the men of our regiment. He sat at his desk like an Oriental Pagod, his little eyes gleaming like green peas within his puffed eyelids.

I saluted. No return. Pulling furiously at his grey moustache, he began a rigmarole about religion and German priests which I cannot now remember.

"Your conduct," he then said, "is most reprehensible and your influence has a very bad effect on the men."

The reprehensible conduct part I could have easily borne, especially coming from a man of the I. G. C.'s antecedents and low origin, as I had heard all about him from a staff officer. But when he spoke about my having a bad influence on the men I felt every drop of blood in my body on fire, and I was about to blaze out when across my eyes there flashed the words

around the passion flower in my room, "AND JESUS WAS SILENT." The I. G. C. added, without drawing his breath, as if he expected me to ask, "In what has my conduct been reprehensible?":

*"We have not to tell you in what. The C.-in-C."*—here he cleared his throat—"The C.-in-C. and myself have decided to return you to the War Office!"

I gave a sigh of relief. I really was not expecting such good fortune, as to get so easily and so safely away from these unscrupulous despots. I would have been sorry to leave my Boys, but as they were scattered to the four winds of East Africa and my time of enlistment would be up in two months—as temporary Chaplains enlisted for a period of 12 months—I was of no benefit to them. So I thought, like Catherine of Arragon, when she heard that her husband, Henry VIII., chopped off the head of Anne Boleyn, wife No. 2, cried out, "Good heavens, what an escape!"

"Is that all, sir?" I asked.

*"That is all."*

I saluted and left. The following afternoon I left by the "Ingoma" for Durban, S. A.

Neither at Dar es Salaam nor at the War Office could I discover what charge they had against me, though, according to military law, I had an absolute right to know, the only answer I got was, "We are not bound to say." O, English Justice! However, I did find out, and in a way they least intended. There were about \$50 allowances coming to me, for which I applied to the Imp. P. Master in Nairobi, as I had

drawn for that amount on my way home. I wrote to demand this amount through the P. M. at Durban, on whom I drew, and the latter sent me the reply :

“From correspondence received this gentleman [referring to me] was sick and absent without leave from the 9/9/16 to 8/10/16. Signed for Imp. Pay Master, B. E. F.”

Could there be anything more absurd or falsehood more patent?

First, let me say that I was never absent from my regiment, *with* or *without* leave, for one day. Secondly, on the very face of it, could I have deserted for a whole month from my regiment in an enemy country, without having been sought for, arrested when found, court-martialed and possibly shot? The very least, I would have been asked for an explanation when I appeared and would have been reprimanded. Never. The reader has only to go back over these pages to see that I was with a post of my men in company with a brother officer at the Mhouda Mission from 10/9/16 to the 4/10/16, when under orders from my O. C. I moved to Mrogoro. It was during this period that all the correspondence passed re Church service, between men and the adjutant of our regiment. The two officers who changed alternately at Mhouda are still alive to prove that I sat down to mess with them, three times every day, at the mission table during that period.

Here, again, is the receipt of my mess account for the same period of time, during which I was accused

of "being absent without leave," though I never ate a morsel from the mess, having paid for my food at the mission :

"Received of the Chaplain RI-50 in settlement of mess account for September, 1916. 2/10/16. (Signed) Second in Command."

On the back of this receipt was the following :

"1. Over page formal receipt for mess bill. 2. Regret the bacon supplied by you was omitted from your credit. The mess was under the impression that it was a present from the Father Superior, Mhouda. 3. As regards the sugar, I think that perhaps the mess did make use of portion of it. (Signed) Second in Command."

Thus I was supplying bacon and sugar to the officers' mess and for which I get credit in my account, during a time when I was accused—and that accusation is there on record—of being a deserter from my regiment. It is preposterous to think that any priest would be guilty of such conduct. Very likely that this was never intended to come to my knowledge. Did I take any action? Yes, I wrote to General Smuts after that gentleman had reached London, asking him to do me justice. He answered me through his secretary, "that he had no recollection of the incident referred to in my letter, and therefore regretted he could take no action."

Did I get my money? perhaps some one may ask. No. Not wishing to get the paymaster in Pretoria into trouble, I sent him a cheque for £10 (\$50.00), money which I drew on the strength of what the army owed



me. I applied to the Imperial Paymaster in B. E. A., but he never paid me for that month of September-October, 1916, when I was accused of "being sick and absent without leave." Let me repeat again, emphatically, that during my whole campaign as Chaplain I was never one moment sick, not even a headache, save when in Dar es Salaam, and even then I was not off duty. And I was never absent from my regiment for one day. My regiment was never without Sunday mass, except the three Sundays in Mhouda, when the O. C. D. Section L. of C. refused to allow the men to assist at Divine Service.

When I, a Chaplain, could be so ill-treated with impunity, the reader can conclude what poor chances a private soldier had for redress when unjustly treated. Let us leave them, and forget them. God's mills grind slowly, but wondrous sure. The Roman Empire fell, the Russian Empire changed hands and government over night. There is another Empire wobbling. The fateful finger is writing its destiny. The 32,000,000 who died in India of starvation during the war, the slavery of Egypt, the oppression for 700 years in Ireland, where gibbet and prison and sword have been tried and are being tried even today, though in vain, to rob Ireland of her inheritance, all this plunder of ages, the "hands dripping with the fat of sacrilege," the million gaping wounds and hungry mouths and bruised hands, are all crying up to heaven for vengeance.

Good men and brave, you who have come still breathing the breath of life from out all the slaughter and perfidy of the late war, who entered it and fought

for noble purposes and high ideals, you have done your duty. Aye! Aye! To the judgment of posterity fling the carrion of those who caused it and gloated and waxed fat in riches over the tortured bodies of the slain. Remember in prayer your dead comrades who fell in battle. In holy meditation go sometimes reverently back to visit their forgotten but honored graves on the fields where you fought with them side by side. They have reached eternal regions, in the Better Land and Large; the palms of victory are in their hands and their faces bright in the glory that shall never fade. They are with God forever. You are soldiers still waging a war with evil. Fail not, fear not. Look to the golden gleam shining on the everlasting hills of heaven. The night will soon be over, and then the day will break, the day that will have no ending, when God your Father will heal the wounds and restore the long lost limbs, and then we shall all rejoice, for the true and lasting victory will have been won.

## CHAPTER XX

### HOME AT LAST



DAR ES SALAAM became, after its capture by the British, military headquarters. Its beautiful residences became the offices for the military. There was scarcely a native to be seen in the streets, except such as were compelled to work in loading and unloading ships, trains and transports.

I left Dar es Salaam by the *Ingoma* in November, 1916, my contract as Chaplain being nearly completed. There must have been about 1,500 troops on board, mostly South African soldiers returning from service completed. After four days' sail we reached Durban, the capital city of Victoria, S. A. There arrived on the same morning 7,000 Australians on their way to France. It was a most consoling sight to see 4,000 of them, Catholics, marching that morning to the Cathedral for High Mass. Their Chaplain was a real Soggarth Aroon, an Irish priest from the diocese of Maitland, N. S. W. Father O'Regan, for such was the Chaplain's name, stood 6 feet 5 inches at least in his military boots and round in proportion. The Chaplain marched with the O. C. at the head of the regiment, and he certainly deserved to be as proud as he looked, leading 4,000 of as fine a lot of men as ever wore a military uniform.



"GOD FOUGHT FOR THEM AND OVERCAME"—*Judith V, 17*

I was met on arrival by Rev. Father O'Donnell, O. M. I., the Adm. of the Cathedral. I think I shall be saying sufficient when I say that he was every inch an Irishman. He gave me that Irish shake-hands that made me feel at once that a home and welcome awaited me in Durban. After I had reported at H. Q., Father O'Donnell took me to the Episcopal residence and introduced me to the genial Bishop De Lal. His Lordship is a Frenchman, of simple and charming manner, and with all the sweet cordiality which one ever meets in a French missionary. I was shown to a neat and comfortably furnished room and made to feel perfectly at home during my stay, which was to be limited only by military orders. The Cathedral, which is a credit to the zeal of His Lordship and his devoted confreres, all members of the Congregation of Mary Immaculate, is a large Gothic structure, equal in every way to any of the Cathedrals in Europe.

Durban is situated in Port Natal, and has a population of some 60,000. It is entirely a new city. So new looked every building that a stranger would have thought that the city had suddenly come into existence. The streets are wide and beautifully shaded with trees, and the cleanliness was most remarkable. The atmosphere is English, intensely English at the time I passed there, and very Protestant. Yet the Cathedral was well filled at all the masses on Sunday and at Benediction on Sunday evening. In spite of the intense Englishness, there was a good sprinkling of Irish in the population. I passed five very enjoyable days in Durban, due entirely to the kind hospitality of

Bishop De Lal and his able assistant, Father O'Donnell. I was transferred to the *Walmer Castle* of the Union S. S. Co., in which we completed our home voyage.

Our next port of call was Port Elizabeth, where I had the good fortune to arrive early in the morning, so I was able to celebrate holy mass. Here I got the first bit of Irish news. Bishop McSharry resides in Port Elizabeth, and is assisted by a number of Irish priests. There was no get-up about the Irish priests of Port Elizabeth—they were the genuine article, full of the love of their native land and yearning for the dawn of its freedom. Port Elizabeth possesses a fine Cathedral and is well supplied with Catholic schools and institutions of charity. The Dominican Sisters from Ireland have a convent and schools second to none at home, where every branch of the higher studies is taught. The Sisters of the Little Company of Mary had just purchased a site for a new hospital. We had but one day at Port Elizabeth, but it was a day that I shall long remember with pleasure.

Three days' sail brought us to Capetown, capital of Cape Colony. It lies at the head of Table Bay, 30 miles north of the Cape of Good Hope. The city is straggling in appearance, built on rocks and slopes rising some 200 feet from the harbor. Every building bears the mark of age, especially the Catholic Cathedral, nearly 200 years old. The aged Bishop, Dr. Rooney, has seen many a caravan of missionaries arrive at Capetown in the days of long ago, as they made their way into the interior of the country. One never



tired listening to His Lordship's tales of the early days of the mission. He has jurisdiction also over St. Helena and Ascension Island. While Capetown itself does not look interesting, it is surrounded by beautiful suburbs, particularly on the beach.

Here we arrived on a Saturday morning and sailed again on Monday. Four days brought us to the celebrated island of St. Helena, the prison of the great exiled Napoleon I. St. Helena is 1,200 miles from Capetown. It is ten miles in length and eight miles in breadth. It appears to be of volcanic origin, standing 1,000 feet above the sea. On arrival St. Helena looks a dismal rock in the wild Atlantic, but once on shore, it is full of verdure and truly a charming place. Right on the sea in a deep valley is a fine church, once Catholic, but now Protestant. Its capital, Jamestown, is little more than a village with one or two small shops. The people seem to depend mostly on passing ships for their supplies of food. The island is a military station, and everyone is either a soldier or a soldier's wife or a pensioner.

An immense ladder, called Jacob's Ladder, leads up a steep rock of 600 feet to the military camp. The Catholic church is a small, unpretentious building. There is no priest on the island. I said mass there at 1 o'clock P. M. Many Catholics came to confession and to mass, and had my arrival been announced many Irish soldiers quartered in the island would have been able to approach the Sacraments. We drove to Longwood, some five miles into the country, saw the prison house of the great Emperor and his private chapel.

There, too, his grave, where he slept until his beloved France had built a tomb worthy of its hero. One feels inclined to stop here and ponder on the changes 100 years have wrought, as the *Entente Cordiale* rises over Les Invalides where England's prisoner sleeps today. But peace has come to the world and to Napoleon. . . . !

Our last stop on the way to England was at Ascension Island, 700 miles north of St. Helena. Ascension—discovered by a Portuguese navigator, Ivan de Nova, on Ascension Thursday, 1501—is a lonely island of volcanic appearance in the broad, wild Atlantic ocean. The island is uninhabited except by the few military officers and men who keep guard there. Through the kindness of our captain and the O. C. of the ship, I went ashore to minister to the few Catholics, nineteen in number, living on Ascension. It was the most barren and abandoned looking spot I ever set foot on. Except for the turtle, which is there in abundance, and plenty of good fish, there is nothing else on which one could live. Probably there are some goats on the island, but I did not see them. I was greatly struck at the devotion with which a lady, the wife of the commanding officer on the island, and the few Catholic soldiers availed of my visit. Of course, there is no priest on Ascension Island, and being a week's journey from Capetown, and the cost of the passage £40, or \$200, the few Catholics suffer much for want of spiritual consolation. God, however, is all goodness, and He knows how to supply what to man is impossible.

This ends the last note in the little diary of a campaign that had many trials, and yet the life had its bright tinges here and there. The last journey is done, the last gun is silent. Our comrades who have fallen are all at rest. God has doubtless accepted their sacrifice, and has shown them mercy. We have returned to the home which we so longed and prayed to see once more. Let us try to make good the remnant of life that still remains to be spent, not wasted. When we sit at eventide in that dear old home, in the midst of the friends of long ago, we shall tell with pride and honor the story of our part in the Great War and read to those yet unborn many an interesting note from the diary of our campaign as the years roll by.

*Per crucem ad Lucem*

VALETE!

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